FRONDES AGRESTES

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READINGS IN 'MODERN PAINTERS'

PRONOBIS ADDRESSES

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READINGS IN 'MODERN PAINTERS'

By JOHN RUSKIN

CHOSEN AT HER PLEASURE

BY THE AUTHOR'S FRIEND

THE YOUNGER LADY OF THE THWAITE,
CONISTON

'Spargit agrestes tibi silva frondes'

SIXTY-FIFTH THOUSAND

LONDON: GEORGE ALLEN & SONS
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PREFACE.

I HAVE been often asked to republish the first book of mine which the public noticed, and which, hitherto, remains their favourite, in a more easily attainable form than that of its existing editions. I am, however, resolved never to republish the book as a whole; some parts of it being, by the established fame of Turner, rendered unnecessary; and others having been always useless, in their praise of excellence which the public will never give the labour necessary to discern. But, finding lately that one of my dearest friends, who, in advanced age, retains the cheerfulness and easily delighted temper of bright youth, had written out, for her own

pleasure, a large number of passages from 'Modern Painters,' it seemed to me certain that what such a person felt to be useful to herself, could not but be useful also to a class of readers whom I much desired to please, and who would sometimes enjoy, in my early writings, what I never should myself have offered them. I asked my friend, therefore, to add to her own already chosen series, any other passages she thought likely to be of permanent interest to general readers; and I have printed her selections in absolute submission to her judgment, merely arranging the pieces she sent me in the order which seemed most convenient for the reciprocal bearing of their fragmentary meanings, and adding here and there an explanatory note; or, it may be, a deprecatory one, in cases where my mind had changed. That she did me the grace to write every word with her own hands, adds, in my eyes, and will, I trust, in the readers' also, to the possible claims of the little book on their sympathy; and

although I hope to publish some of the scientific and technical portions of the original volumes in my own large editions, the selections here made by my friend under her quiet woods at Coniston—the Unter-Walden of England—will, I doubt not, bring within better reach of many readers, for whom I am not now able myself to judge or choose, such service as the book was ever capable of rendering, in the illustration of the powers of nature, and intercession for her now too often despised and broken peace.

HERNE HILL,
5th December, 1874.

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FRONDES AGRESTES.

SECTION I.

PRINCIPLES OF ART.

1. PERFECT taste is the faculty of receiving the greatest possible pleasure from those material sources which are attractive to our moral nature in its purity and perfection; but why we receive pleasure from some forms and colours, and not from others, is no more to be asked or answered than why we like sugar and dislike wormwood.

2. The temper by which right taste is formed is characteristically patient. It dwells upon what is submitted to it. It does not trample upon it,—lest it should be pearls, even though it look like husks. It is good ground,

penetrable, retentive; it does not send up thorns of unkind thoughts, to choke the weak seed; it is hungry and thirsty too, and drinks all the dew that falls on it. It is an honest and good heart, that shows no too ready springing before the sun be up, but fails not afterwards; it is distrustful of itself, so as to be ready to believe and to try all things; and yet so trustful of itself, that it will neither quit what it has tried, nor take anything without trying. And the pleasure which it has in things that it finds true and good, is so great, that it cannot possibly be led aside by any tricks of fashion, or diseases of vanity; it cannot be cramped in its conclusions by partialities and hypocrisies; its visions and its delights are too penetrating,—too living,—for any white-washed object or shallow fountain long to endure or supply. It clasps all that it loves so hard that it crushes it if it be hollow.

3. It is the common consent of men that whatever branch of any pursuit ministers to the bodily comforts, and regards material uses, is ignoble, and whatever part is addressed to

the mind only, is noble; and that geology does better in reclothing dry bones and revealing lost creations, than in tracing veins of lead and beds of iron; astronomy better in opening to us the houses of heaven, than in teaching navigation; botany better in displaying structure than in expressing juices; surgery better in investigating organization than in setting limbs.—Only it is ordained that, for our encouragement, every step we make in the more exalted range of science adds something also to its practical applicabilities; that all the great phenomena of nature, the knowledge of which is desired by the angels only, by us partly, as it reveals to farther vision the being and the glory of Him in whom they rejoice and we live, dispense yet such kind influences and so much of material blessing as to be joyfully felt by all inferior creatures, and to be desired by them with such single desire as the imperfection of their nature may admit; that the strong torrents, which, in their own gladness, fill the hills with hollow thunder, and the vales with winding light, have yet their bounden charge of field to

feed, and barge to bear; that the fierce flames to which the Alp owes its upheaval and the volcano its terror, temper for us the metal vein, and warm the quickening spring; and that for our incitement, I say, not our reward, —for knowledge is its own reward,—herbs have their healing, stones their preciousness, and stars their times.

4. Had it been ordained by the Almighty* that the highest pleasures of sight should be those of most difficult attainment, and that to arrive at them it should be necessary to accumulate gilded palaces, tower over tower, and pile artificial mountains around insinuated lakes, there would never have been a direct contradiction between the unselfish duties and the inherent desires of every individual. But no such contradiction exists in the system

* The reader must observe, that having been thoroughly disciplined in the Evangelical schools, I supposed myself, at four-and-twenty, to know all about the ordinances of the Almighty. Nevertheless, the practical contents of the sentence are good; if only they are intelligible, which I doubt.

of Divine Providence; which, leaving it open to us, if we will, as creatures in probation, to abuse this sense like every other, and pamper it with selfish and thoughtless vanities, as we pamper the palate with deadly meats, until the appetite of tasteful cruelty is lost in its sickened satiety, incapable of pleasure unless, Caligula like, it concentrates the labour of a million of lives into the sensation of an hour,—leaves it also open to us, by humble and loving ways, to make ourselves susceptible of deep delight, which shall not separate us from our fellows, nor require the sacrifice of any duty or occupation, but which shall bind us closer to men and to God, and be with us always, harmonized with every action, consistent with every claim, unchanging and eternal.

5. A great Idealist never can be egotistic. The whole of his power depends upon his losing sight and feeling of his own existence, and becoming a mere witness and mirror of truth, and a scribe of visions,—always passive in sight, passive in utterance, lamenting continually

that he cannot completely reflect nor clearly utter all he has seen,—not by any means a proud state for a man to be in. But the man who has no invention is always setting things in order,* and putting the world to rights, and mending, and beautifying, and pluming himself on his doings, as supreme in all ways.

6. So far as education does indeed tend to make the senses delicate, and the perceptions accurate, and thus enables people to be pleased with quiet instead of gaudy colour, and with graceful instead of coarse form; and by long acquaintance with the best things, to discern quickly what is fine from what is common—so far acquired taste is an honourable faculty, and it is true praise of anything to say it is "in good taste." But,† so far as this higher education

* I am now a comic illustration of this sentence, myself. I have not a ray of invention in all my brains; but am intensely rational and orderly, and have resolutely begun to set the world to rights.

† Nobody need begin this second volume sentence unless they are breathed like the Græme :—

"Right up Ben Ledi could he press,
And not a sob his toil confess."

has a tendency to narrow the sympathies and harden the heart, diminishing the interest of all beautiful things by familiarity, until even what is best can hardly please, and what is brightest hardly entertain,—so far as it fosters pride, and leads men to found the pleasure they take in anything, not on the worthiness of the thing, but on the degree in which it indicates some greatness of their own, (as people build marble porticoes, and inlay marble floors, not so much because they like the colours of marble, or find it pleasant to the foot, as because such porches and floors are costly, and separated in all human eyes from plain entrances of stone and timber) ;—so far as it leads people to prefer gracefulness of dress, manner, and aspect, to value of substance and heart, liking a well-*said* thing better than a true thing, and a well-trained manner better than a sincere one, and a delicately-formed face better than a good-natured one,—and in all other ways and things setting custom and semblance above everlasting truth ;—so far, finally, as it induces a sense of inherent distinction between class and class, and causes everything to be more or

less despised which has no social rank, so that the affection, pleasure, and grief of a clown are looked upon as of no interest compared with the affection and grief of a well-bred man ;—just so far, in all these several ways, the feeling induced by what is called "a liberal education" is utterly adverse to the understanding of noble art.

7. He who habituates himself in his daily life to seek for the stern facts in whatever he hears or sees, will have these facts again brought before him by the involuntary imaginative power, in their noblest associations ; and he who seeks for frivolities and fallacies, will have frivolities and fallacies again presented to him in his dreams.*

8. All the histories of the Bible are yet waiting to be painted. Moses has never been painted ; Elijah never ; David never (except as a mere ruddy stripling) ; Deborah never ;

* Very good. Few people have any idea how much more important the government of the mind is, than the force of its exertion. Nearly all the world flog their horses, without ever looking where they are going.

Gideon never; Isaiah never.* What single example does the reader remember of painting which suggested so much as the faintest shadow of their deeds? Strong men in armour, or aged men with flowing beards, he *may* remember, who, when he looked at his Louvre or Uffizi catalogue, he found were intended to stand for David, or Moses. But does he suppose that, if these pictures had suggested to him the feeblest image of the presence of such men, he would have passed on, as he assuredly did, to the next picture, representing, doubtless, Diana and Actæon, or Cupid and the Graces, or a gambling quarrel in a pothouse—with no sense of pain or surprise? Let him meditate over the matter, and he will find ultimately that what I say is true, and that religious art at once complete and sincere never yet has existed.

* I knew nothing, when I wrote this passage, of Luini, Filippo Lippi, or Sandro Botticelli; and had not capacity to enter into the deeper feelings, even of the men whom I was chiefly studying,—Tintoret and Fra Angelico. But the British public is at present as little acquainted with the greater Florentines as I was then, and the passage, for *them*, remains true.

SECTION II.

POWER AND OFFICE OF IMAGINATION.

9. What are the legitimate uses of the imagination,—that is to say, of the power of perceiving, or conceiving with the mind, things which cannot be perceived by the senses? Its first and noblest use is,* to enable us to bring sensibly to our sight the things which are recorded as belonging to our future state, or invisibly surrounding us in this. It is given us, that we may imagine the cloud of witnesses, in heaven, and earth, and sea, as if they were now present,—the souls of the righteous waiting for us; that we may conceive the great army of the inhabitants of heaven,

* I should be glad if the reader who is interested in the question here raised, would read, as illustrative of the subsequent statement, the account of Tintoret's 'Paradise,' in the close of my Oxford lecture on Michael Angelo and Tintoret, which I have printed separately to make it generally accessible.

and discover among them those whom we most desire to be with for ever; that we may be able to vision forth the ministry of angels beside us, and see the chariots of fire on the mountains that gird us round; but, above all, to call up the scenes and facts in which we are commanded to believe, and be present, as if in the body, at every recorded event of the history of the Redeemer. Its second and ordinary use is, to empower us to traverse the scenes of all other history, and to force the facts to become again visible, so as to make upon us the same impression which they would have made if we had witnessed them; and, in the minor necessities of life, to enable us, out of any present good, to gather the utmost measure of enjoyment, by investing it with happy associations, and, in any present evil, to lighten it, by summoning back the images of other hours; and also to give to all mental truths some visible type, in allegory, simile, or personification, which shall most deeply enforce them; and finally, when the mind is utterly outwearied, to refresh it with such innocent play as shall be most in harmony with the

suggestive voices of natural things, permitting it to possess living companionship, instead of silent beauty, and create for itself fairies in the grass, and naiads in the wave.

10. Yet, because we thus reverence the power and art of imagination, let none of us despise the power and art of memory.

Let the reader consider seriously what he would give at any moment to have the power of arresting the fairest scenes, those which so often rise before him only to vanish; to stay the cloud in its fading, the leaf in its trembling, and the shadows in their changing; to bid the fitful foam be fixed upon the river, and the ripples be everlasting upon the lake; and then to bear away with him no darkness or feeble sun-stain, (though even that is beautiful,) but a counterfeit which should seem no counterfeit—the true and perfect image of life indeed. Or rather, (for the full majesty of such a power is not thus sufficiently expressed,) let him consider that it would be in effect nothing less than a capacity of transporting himself at any moment into any scene—a gift as great as can be

possessed by a disembodied spirit; and suppose, also, this necromancy embracing not only the present but the past, and enabling us seemingly to enter into the very bodily presence of men long since gathered to the dust; to behold them in act as they lived; but, with greater privilege than ever was granted to the companions of those transient acts of life, to see them fastened at our will in the gesture and expression of an instant, and stayed on the eve of some great deed, in immortality of burning purpose.—Conceive, so far as is possible, such power as this, and then say whether the art which conferred it is to be spoken lightly of, or whether we should not rather reverence, as half-divine, a gift which would go so far as to raise us into the rank, and invest us with the felicities, of angels.*

11. I believe the first test of a truly great man is his humility. I do not mean by humility, doubt of his own power, or hesitation of speaking his opinions; but a right understanding of

* Passage written in opposition to the vulgar notion that the 'mere imitation' of Nature is easy, and useless.

the relation between what *he* can do and say, and the rest of the world's sayings and doings. All great men not only know their business, but usually know that they know it; and are not only right in their main opinions, but they usually know that they are right in them; only they do not think much of themselves on that account. Arnolfo knows he can build a good dome at Florence; Albert Durer writes calmly to one who has found fault with his work,—"It cannot be better done;" Sir Isaac Newton knows that he has worked out a problem or two that would have puzzled anybody else; only they do not expect their fellow-men, therefore, to fall down and worship them. They have a curious under-sense of powerlessness, feeling that the greatness is not *in* them, but *through* them—that they could not do or be anything else than God made them; and they see something divine and God-made in every other man they meet, and are endlessly, foolishly, incredibly merciful.

12. As far as I can observe, it is a constant law, that the greatest men, whether poets or

historians, live entirely in their own age, and the greatest fruits of their work are gathered out of their own age. Dante paints Italy in the thirteenth century; Chaucer, England in the fourteenth; Masaccio, Florence in the fifteenth; Tintoret, Venice in the sixteenth; all of them utterly regardless of anachronism and minor error of every kind, but getting always vital truth out of the vital present. If it be said that Shakespeare wrote perfect historical plays on subjects belonging to the preceding centuries, I answer that they *are* perfect plays, just because there is no care about centuries in them, but a life which all men recognise for the human life of all time—and this it is, not because Shakespeare sought to give universal truth, but because painting, honestly and completely, from the men about him, he painted that human nature which is indeed constant enough,—a rogue in the fifteenth century being *at heart* what a rogue is in the nineteenth, and was in the twelfth; and an honest or knightly man being in like manner very similar to other such at any other time. And the work of these great idealists is, therefore, always universal;

not because it is not *portrait*, but because it is *complete* portrait, down to the heart, which is the same in all ages; and the work of the mean idealists is *not* universal, not because it is portrait, but because it is *half* portrait—of the outside, the manners and the dress, not of the heart. Thus Tintoret and Shakespeare paint, both of them, simply Venetian and English nature, as they saw it in their time, down to the root; and it does for *all* time; but as for any care to cast themselves into the particular ways and tones of thought, or custom, of past time in their historical work, you will find it in neither of them,* nor in any other perfectly great man that I know of.

13. I think it probable that many readers

* What vestige of Egyptian character is there, for instance, in Cleopatra?—of Athenian in Theseus or Timon?—of old English in Imogen or Cordelia?—of old Scottish in Macbeth?—or even of mediæval Italian in Petruchio, the Merchant of Venice, or Desdemona? And the Roman plays appear definitely Roman only because the strength of Rome was the eternal strength of the world,—pure family life, sustained by agriculture, and defended by simple and fearless manhood.

may be surprised at my calling Scott the great representative of the mind of the age of literature. Those who can perceive the intense penetrative depth of Wordsworth, and the exquisite finish and melodious power of Tennyson, may be offended at my placing in higher rank that poetry of careless glance and reckless rhyme in which Scott poured out the fancies of his youth; and those who are familiar with the subtle analysis of the French novelists, or who have in any wise submitted themselves to the influence of German philosophy, may be equally indignant at my ascribing a principality to Scott among the literary men of Europe, in an age which has produced De Balzac, and Goethe.*

But the mass of sentimental literature concerned with the analysis and description of emotion, headed by the poetry of Byron, is altogether of lower rank than the literature which

* I knew nothing of Goethe when I put him with Balzac; but the intolerable dulness which encumbers the depth of Wilhelm Meister, and the cruel reserve which conceals from all but the intensest readers the meaning of Faust, have made him, in a great degree, an evil influence in European literature; and Evil is always second-rate.

merely describes what it saw. The true seer feels as intensely as any one else; but he does not much describe his feelings. He tells you whom he met, and what they said; leaves you to make out, from that, what they feel, and what he feels, but goes into little detail. And, generally speaking, pathetic writing and careful explanation of passion are quite easy, compared with this plain recording of what people said, and did; or with the right invention of what they are likely to say and do; for this reason, that to invent a story, or admirably and thoroughly tell any part of a story, it is necessary to grasp the entire mind of every personage concerned in it, and know precisely how they would be affected by what happens; which to do, requires a colossal intellect; but to describe a separate emotion delicately, it is only needed that one should feel it oneself; and thousands of people are capable of feeling this or that noble emotion, for one who is able to enter into all the feelings of somebody sitting on the other side of the table. Even, therefore, where this sentimental literature is first rate, as in passages of Byron, Tennyson, and Keats, it

ought not to be ranked so high as the creative; and though perfection even in narrow fields is perhaps as rare as in the wider, and it may be as long before we have another "In Memoriam" as another "Guy Mannering," I unhesitatingly receive as a greater manifestation of power, the right invention of a few sentences spoken by Pleydell and Mannering across their supper-table, than the most tender and passionate melodies of the self-examining verse.

14. Fancy plays like a squirrel in its circular prison, and is happy; but Imagination is a pilgrim on the earth—and her home is in heaven. Shut her from the fields of the celestial mountains, bear her from breathing their lofty, sun-warmed air; and we may as well turn upon her the last bolt of the Tower of Famine, and give the keys to the keeping of the wildest surge that washes Capraja and Gorgona.*

* I leave this passage, as my friend has chosen it; but it is unintelligible without the contexts, which show how all the emotions described in the preceding passages of this section, are founded on trust in the beneficence and rule of an Omnipotent Spirit.

15. In the highest poetry, there is no word so familiar, but a great man will bring good out of it, or rather, it will bring good to him, and answer some end for which no other word would have done equally well. A common person, for instance, would be mightily puzzled to apply the word 'whelp' to anyone, with a view of flattering him. There is a certain freshness and energy in the term, which gives it agreeableness, but it seems difficult, at first hearing it, to use it complimentarily. If the person spoken of be a prince, the difficulty seems increased; and when farther he is at one and the same moment to be called a 'whelp' and contemplated as a hero, it seems that a common idealist might well be brought to a pause! But hear Shakespeare do it:—

> "Awake his warlike spirit,
> And your great uncle's, Edward the Black Prince,
> Who on the French ground played a tragedy,
> Making defeat on the full power of France,
> While his most mighty father on a hill
> Stood smiling, to behold his lion's whelp
> Forage in blood of French nobility."

16. Although in all lovely nature there is,

first, an excellent degree of simple beauty, addressed to the eye alone, yet often what impresses us most will form but a very small portion of that visible beauty. That beauty may, for instance, be composed of lovely flowers, and glittering streams, and blue sky and white clouds; and yet the thing that impresses us most, and which we should be sorriest to lose, may be a thin grey film on the extreme horizon, not so large, in the space of the scene it occupies, as a piece of gossamer on a near-at-hand bush, nor in any wise prettier to the eye than the gossamer; but because the gossamer is known by us for a little bit of spider's work, and the other grey film is known to mean a mountain ten thousand feet high, inhabited by a race of noble mountaineers, we are solemnly impressed by the aspect of it, and yet all the while the thoughts and knowledge which cause us to receive this impression are so obscure that we are not conscious of them.

17. Examine the nature of your own emotion, (if you feel it,) at the sight of the Alps; and you find all the brightness of that emotion

hanging, like dew on a gossamer, on a curious web of subtle fancy and imperfect knowledge. First you have a vague idea of its size, coupled with wonder at the work of the great Builder of its walls and foundations; then an apprehension of its eternity, a pathetic sense of its perpetualness, and your own transientness, as of the grass upon its side;—then, and in very sadness, a sense of strange companionship with past generations, in seeing what they saw. They did not see the clouds that are floating over your head, nor the cottage wall on the other side of the field, nor the road by which you are travelling. But they saw *that*. The wall of granite in the heavens was the same to them as to you. They have ceased to look upon it; you will soon cease to look also, and the granite wall will be for others. Then, mingled with these more solemn imaginations, come the understandings of the gifts and glories of the Alp;—the fancying forth of all the fountains that well from its rocky walls, and strong rivers that are born out of its ice, and of all the pleasant valleys that wind between its cliffs, and all the châlets that gleam among its

clouds, and happy farmsteads couched upon its pastures; while, together with the thoughts of these, rise strange sympathies with all the unknown of human life, and happiness, and death, signified by that narrow white flame of the everlasting snow, seen so far in the morning sky. These images, and far more than these, lie at the root of the emotion which you feel at the sight of the Alps. You may not trace them in your heart, for there is a great deal more in your heart, both of evil and good, than you can ever trace; but they stir you and quicken you for all that. Assuredly, so far as you feel more at beholding the snowy mountain than any other object of the same sweet silvery grey these are the kind of images which cause you to do so; and observe, these are nothing more than a greater apprehension of the *facts* of the thing. We call the power 'Imagination,' because it imagines or conceives; but it is only noble imagination, if it imagines or conceives the *truth*. And according to the degree of knowledge possessed, and of sensibility to the pathetic or impressive character

of the things known, will be the degree of this imaginative delight.

18. So natural is it to the human heart to fix itself in hope rather than in present possession, and so subtle is the charm which the imagination casts over what is distant or denied, that there is often a more touching power in the scenes which contain far-away promises of something greater than themselves, than in those which exhaust the treasures and powers of nature in an unconquerable and excellent glory, leaving nothing more to be by fancy pictured or pursued. I do not know that there is a district in the world more calculated to illustrate this power of the expectant imagination than that which surrounds the city of Fribourg in Switzerland, extending from it towards Berne. It is of grey sandstone, considerably elevated, but presenting no object of striking interest to the passing traveller; so that as it is generally seen in the course of a hasty journey from the Bernese Alps to those of Savoy, it is rarely regarded with any other sensation than that of weariness, all the more painful because accompanied with reaction from

the high excitement caused by the splendour of the Bernese Oberland. The traveller—foot-sore, feverish, and satiated with glacier and precipice, —lies back in the corner of the diligence, perceiving little more than that the road is winding and hilly, and the country through which it passes, cultivated and tame. Let him, however, only do this tame country the justice of staying in it a few days, until his mind has recovered its tone, and take one or two long walks through its fields, and he will have other thoughts of it. It is, as I said, an undulating district of grey sandstone, never attaining any considerable height, but having enough of the mountain spirit to throw itself into continual succession of bold slope and dale; elevated, also, just far enough above the sea to render the pine a frequent forest tree along its irregular ridges. Through this elevated tract the river cuts its way in a ravine some five or six hundred feet in depth, which winds for leagues between the gentle hills, unthought of until its edge is approached; and then, suddenly, through the boughs of the firs, the eye perceives, beneath, the green and gliding stream, and the

broad walls of sandstone cliff that form its banks ; hollowed out where the river leans against them, at its turns, into perilous overhanging ; and, on the other shore, at the same spots, leaving little breadths of meadow between them and the water, half overgrown with thicket, deserted in their sweetness, inaccessible from above, and rarely visited by any curious wanderers along the hardly traceable footpath which struggles for existence beneath the rocks. And there the river ripples and eddies and murmurs in an outer solitude. It is passing through a thickly peopled country ; but never was a stream so lonely. The feeblest and most far-away torrent among the high hills has its companions; the goats browse beside it; and the traveller drinks from it, and passes over it with his staff; and the peasant traces a new channel for it down to his mill-wheel. But this stream has no companions ; it flows on in an infinite seclusion, not secret, nor threatening, but a quietness of sweet daylight and open air—a broad space of tender and deep desolateness, drooped into repose out of the midst of human labour and life ; the waves plashing

lowly, with none to hear them; and the wild birds building in the boughs, with none to fray them away; and the soft, fragrant herbs rising and breathing and fading, with no hand to gather them;—and yet all bright and bare to the clouds above, and to the fresh fall of the passing sunshine and pure rain. But above the brows of these scarped cliffs, all is in an instant changed. A few steps only beyond the firs that stretch their branches, angular, and wild, and white, like forks of lightning, into the air of the ravine,—and we are in an arable country of the most perfect richness; the swathes of its corn glowing and burning from field to field: its pretty hamlets all vivid with fruitful orchards, and flowery garden, and goodly with steep-roofed storehouse and barn; its well-kept, hard, park-like roads rising and falling from hillside to hillside, or disappearing among brown banks of moss, and thickets of the wild raspberry and rose, or gleaming through lines of tall trees, half glade, half avenue, where the gate opens, or the gateless path turns trustedly aside, unhindered, into the garden of some statelier

house, surrounded in rural pride with its golden hives, and carved granaries, and irregular domain of latticed and espaliered cottages, gladdening to look upon in their delicate homeliness —delicate, yet in some sort, rude; not like our English homes—trim, laborious, formal, irreproachable in comfort—but with a peculiar carelessness and largeness in all their detail, harmonizing with the outlawed loveliness of their country. For there is an untamed strength even in all that soft and habitable land. It is indeed gilded with corn, and fragrant with deep grass, but it is not subdued to the plough or to the scythe. It gives at its own free will; it seems to have nothing wrested from it, nor conquered in it. It is not redeemed from desertness, but unrestrained in fruitfulness,—a generous land, bright with capricious plenty, and laughing from vale to vale in fitful fulness, kind and wild. Nor this without some sterner element mingled in the heart of it. For, along all its ridges stand the dark masses of innumerable pines,* taking no part in its gladness;

* Almost the only pleasure I have, myself, in rereading my old books, is my sense of having at least

asserting themselves for ever as fixed shadows, not to be pierced or banished even in the intensest sunlight; fallen flakes and fragments of the night, stayed in their solemn squares in the midst of all the rosy bendings of the orchard boughs and yellow effulgence of the harvest, and tracing themselves in black network and motionless fringes against the blanched blue of the horizon in its saintly clearness. And yet they do not sadden the landscape, but seem to have been set there chiefly to show how bright everything else is round them; and all the clouds look of pure silver, and all the air seems filled with a whiter and more living sunshine, where they are pierced by the sable points of the pines; and all the pastures look of more glowing green where they run up between the purple trunks; and the sweet field footpaths skirt the edges of the forest for the sake of its shade, sloping up and down about the slippery roots, and losing themselves every now and then hopelessly among the violets and ground-ivy and brown

done justice to the pine. Compare the passage in this book, No. 47.

sheddings of the fibrous leaves, and at last plunging into some open aisle, where the light through the distant stems shows that there is a chance of coming out again on the other side; and coming out indeed in a little while from the scented darkness into the dazzling air and marvellous landscape, which stretches still farther and farther in new wilfulness of grove and garden, until at last the craggy mountains of the Simmenthal rise out of it, sharp into the rolling of the southern clouds.

19.* Although there are few districts of Northern Europe, however apparently dull or tame, in which I cannot find pleasure; though the whole of Northern France (except Champagne), dull as it seems to most travellers, is to me a perpetual paradise; and, putting Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, and one or two such other

* This, and the following passage, have nothing to do with the general statements in the book. They occur with reference only to my own idiosyncrasy. I was much surprised when I found first how individual it was, by a Pre-Raphaelite painter's declaring a piece of unwholesome reedy fen to be more beautiful than Benvenue.

perfectly flat districts aside, there is not an English county which I should not find entertainment in exploring the cross-roads of, foot by foot,—yet all my best enjoyment would be owing to the imagination of the hills, colouring with their far-away memories every lowland stone and herb. The pleasant French coteau, green in the sunshine, delights me either by what real mountain character it has in itself, (for in extent and succession of promontory, the flanks of the French valleys have quite the sublimity of true mountain distances,) or by its broken ground and rugged steps among the vines, and rise of the leafage above against the blue sky, as it might rise at Vevay or Como. There is not a wave of the Seine, but is associated in my mind with the first rise of the sandstones and forest pines of Fontainebleau; and with the hope of the Alps, as one leaves Paris, with the horses' heads to the south-west, the morning sun flashing on the bright waves at Charenton. If there be no hope or association of this kind, and if I cannot deceive myself into fancying that perhaps at the next rise of the road there may be the

film of a blue hill in the gleam of sky at the horizon, the landscape, however beautiful, produces in me even a kind of sickness and pain; and the whole view from Richmond Hill or Windsor Terrace,—nay, the gardens of Alcinous, with their perpetual summer—or of the Hesperides, (if they were flat, and not close to Atlas,) golden apples and all, I would give away in an instant, for one mossy granite stone a foot broad, and two leaves of lady fern.

20. I cannot find words to express the intense pleasure I have always in first finding myself, after some prolonged stay in England, at the foot of the old tower of Calais Church. The large neglect, the noble unsightliness of it; the record of its years written so visibly, yet without sign of weakness or decay; its stern wasteness and gloom, eaten away by the Channel winds, and overgrown with the bitter sea grasses; its slates and tiles all shaken and rent, and yet not falling; its desert of brickwork, full of bolts, and holes, and ugly fissures, and yet strong, like a bare brown rock; its

carelessness of what any one thinks or feels about it, putting forth no claim, having no beauty, nor desirableness, pride, nor grace; yet neither asking for pity; not, as ruins are, useless and piteous, feebly or fondly garrulous of better days; but, useful still, going through its own daily work,—as some old fisherman, beaten grey by storm, yet drawing his daily nets: so it stands, with no complaint about its past youth, in blanched and meagre massiveness and serviceableness, gathering human souls together underneath it; the sound of its bells for prayer still rolling through its rents; and the grey peak of it seen far across the sea, principal of the three that rise above the waste of surfy sand and hillocked shore, —the lighthouse for life, and the belfry for labour, and this—for patience and praise.

I cannot tell the half of the strange pleasures and thoughts that come about me at the sight of that old tower; for, in some sort, it is the epitome of all that makes the continent of Europe interesting, as opposed to new countries; and, above all, it completely expresses that agedness in the midst of active

life which binds the old and the new into harmony. We in England have our new streets, our new inn, our green shaven lawn, and our piece of ruin emergent from it—a mere *specimen* of the Middle Ages put on a bit of velvet carpet, to be shown; and which, but for its size, might as well be on a museum shelf at once, under cover;—but, on the Continent, the links are unbroken between the past and present; and, in such use as they can serve for, the grey-headed wrecks are suffered to stay with men; while, in unbroken line, the generations of spared buildings are seen succeeding, each in its place. And thus, in its largeness, in its permitted evidence of slow decline, in its poverty, in its absence of all pretence, of all show and care for outside aspect, that Calais tower has an infinite of symbolism in it, all the more striking because usually seen in contrast with English scenes expressive of feelings the exact reverse of these.*

* My friend won't write out the reverse! Our book is to be all jelly, and no powder, it seems. Well, I'm very thankful she likes the jelly,—at any rate, it makes me sure that *it* is well made.

SECTION III.

ILLUSTRATIVE: THE SKY.

21. It is a strange thing how little in general people know about the sky. It is the part of creation in which Nature has done more for the sake of pleasing man—more for the sole and evident purpose of talking to him, and teaching him—than in any other of her works; and it is just the part in which we least attend to her. There are not many of her other works in which some more material or essential purpose than the mere pleasing of man is not answered by every part of their organization; but every essential purpose of the sky might, so far as we know, be answered if once in three days, or thereabouts, a great, ugly, black rain-cloud were brought up over the blue, and everything well watered, and so all left blue again till next time, with perhaps a film of morning and

evening mist for dew;—and instead of this, there is not a moment of any day of our lives, when Nature is not producing scene after scene, picture after picture, glory after glory, and working still upon such exquisite and constant principles of the most perfect beauty, that it is quite certain * it is all done for us, and intended for our perpetual pleasure. And every man, wherever placed, however far from other sources of interest or of beauty, has this doing for him constantly. The noblest scenes of the earth can be seen and known but by few; it is not intended that man should live always in the midst of them; he injures them by his presence, he ceases to feel them if he is always with them; but the sky is for all: bright as it is, it is not

> "too bright nor good
> For human nature's daily food;"

it is fitted in all its functions for the perpetual comfort and exalting of the heart,—for soothing

* At least, I thought so, when I was four-and-twenty. At five-and-fifty, I fancy that it is just possible there may be other creatures in the universe to be pleased, or,—it may be,—displeased, by the weather.

it, and purifying it from its dross and dust. Sometimes gentle, sometimes capricious, sometimes awful—never the same for two moments together; almost human in its passions, almost spiritual in its tenderness, almost divine in its infinity, its appeal to what is immortal in us is as distinct as its ministry of chastisement or of blessing to what is mortal is essential. And yet we never attend to it, we never make it a subject of thought, but as it has to do with our animal sensations; we look upon all by which it speaks to us more clearly than to brutes, upon all which bears witness to the intentions of the Supreme that we are to receive more from the covering vault than the light and the dew which we share with the weed and the worm, as only a succession of meaningless and monotonous accident, too common and too vain to be worthy of a moment of watchfulness, or a glance of admiration. If in our moments of utter idleness and insipidity, we turn to the sky as a last resource, which of its phenomena do we speak of? One says, it has been wet; and another, it has been windy; and another, it has been warm. Who among the

whole chattering crowd can tell one of the forms and the precipices of the chain of tall white mountains that girded the horizon at noon yesterday? Who saw the narrow sunbeam that came out of the south, and smote upon their summits until they melted and mouldered away in a dust of blue rain? Who saw the dance of the dead clouds when the sunlight left them last night, and the west wind blew them before it like withered leaves? All has passed unregretted as unseen; or, if the apathy be ever shaken off even for an instant, it is only by what is gross, or what is extraordinary. And yet it is not in the broad and fierce manifestations of the elemental energies, not in the clash of the hail, nor the drift of the whirlwind, that the highest characters of the sublime are developed. God is not in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in the still, small voice. They are but the blunt and the low faculties of our nature, which can only be addressed through lamp-black and lightning. It is in quiet and subdued passages of unobtrusive majesty, the deep and the calm, and the perpetual; that

which must be sought ere it is seen, and loved ere it is understood; things which the angels work out for us daily, and yet vary eternally; which are never wanting, and never repeated; which are to be found always, yet each found but once;—it is through these that the lesson of devotion is chiefly taught, and the blessing of beauty given.

22. We habitually think of the rain-cloud only as dark and grey; not knowing that we owe to it perhaps the fairest, though not the most dazzling, of the hues of heaven. Often in our English mornings, the rain-clouds in the dawn form soft, level fields, which melt imperceptibly into the blue; or, when of less extent, gather into apparent bars, crossing the sheets of broader cloud above; and all these bathed throughout in an unspeakable light of pure rose-colour, and purple, and amber, and blue; not shining, but misty-soft; the barred masses, when seen nearer, composed of clusters or tresses of cloud, like floss silk; looking as if each knot were a little swathe or sheaf of lighted rain.

23. Aqueous vapour or mist, suspended in the atmosphere, becomes visible exactly as dust does in the air of a room. In the shadows, you not only cannot see the dust itself, because unillumined, but you can see other objects through the dust, without obscurity; the air being thus actually rendered more transparent by a deprivation of light. Where a sunbeam enters, every particle of dust becomes visible, and a palpable interruption to the sight; so that a transverse sunbeam is a real obstacle to the vision—you cannot see things clearly through it. In the same way, wherever vapour is illuminated by transverse rays, there it becomes visible as a whiteness more or less affecting the purity of the blue, and destroying it exactly in proportion to the degree of illumination. But where vapour is in shade, it has very little effect on the sky, perhaps making it a little deeper and greyer than it otherwise would be, but not, itself, unless very dense, distinguishable or felt as mist.

24. Has the reader any distinct idea of what clouds are?

* That mist which lies in the morning so softly in the valley, level and white, through which the tops of the trees rise as if through an inundation—why is *it* so heavy, and why does it lie so low, being yet so thin and frail that it will melt away utterly into splendour of morning when the sun has shone on it but a few moments more? Those colossal pyramids, huge and firm, with outlines as of rocks, and strength to bear the beating of the high sun full on their fiery flanks,—why are *they* so light, their bases high over our heads, high over the heads of Alps? Why will these melt away, not as the sun *rises*, but as he *descends*, and leave the stars of twilight clear; while the valley vapour gains again upon the earth, like a shroud? Or that ghost of a cloud, which steals by yonder clump of pines; nay, which does *not* steal by them, but haunts them, wreathing yet round them, and yet,—and yet,—slowly; now falling in a fair waved line like a woman's veil; now fading, now gone; we look away for an instant, and look back, and it is again there. What has it to do with that clump of pines, that

* This is a fifth volume bit, and worth more attention.

it broods by them, and weaves itself among their branches, to and fro? Has it hidden a cloudy treasure among the moss at their roots, which it watches thus? Or has some strong enchanter charmed it into fond returning, or bound it fast within those bars of bough? And yonder filmy crescent, bent like an archer's bow above the snowy summit, the highest of all the hills—that white arch which never forms but over the supreme crest,—how is it stayed there, repelled apparently from the snow,—nowhere touching it, the clear sky seen between it and the mountain edge, yet never leaving it—poised as a white bird hovers over its nest? Or those war clouds that gather on the horizon, dragon-crested, tongued with fire,—how is their barbed strength bridled? What bits are those they are champing with their vapourous lips, flinging off flakes of black foam? Leagued leviathans of the Sea of Heaven,—out of their nostrils goeth smoke, and their eyes are like the eyelids of the morning; the sword of him that layeth at them cannot hold the spear, the dart, nor the habergeon. Where ride the captains of their

armies? Where are set the measures of their march? Fierce murmurers, answering each other from morning until evening—what rebuke is this which has awed them into peace;—what hand has reined them back by the way in which they came?

I know not if the reader will think at first that questions like these are easily answered. So far from it, I rather believe that some of the mysteries of the clouds never will be understood by us at all. "Knowest thou the balancings of the clouds?" Is the answer ever to be one of pride? The wondrous works of Him, who is perfect in knowledge? Is *our* knowledge ever to be so? . . . .

For my own part, I enjoy the mystery, and perhaps the reader may. I think he ought. He should not be less grateful for summer rain, or see less beauty in the clouds of morning, because they come to prove him with hard questions; to which perhaps, if we look close at the heavenly scroll, we may find also a syllable or two of answer, illuminated here and there.*

* Compare, in 'Sartor Resartus,' the boy's watching from the garden wall.

And though the climates of the south and east may be *comparatively* clear, they are no more absolutely clear than our own northern air. Intense clearness, whether, in the north, after or before rain, or in some moments of twilight in the south, is always, as far as I am acquainted with natural phenomena, a *notable* thing. Mist of some sort, or mirage, or confusion of light or of cloud, are the general facts; the distance may vary in different climates at which the effects of mist begin, but they are always present; and therefore, in all probability, it is meant that we should enjoy them. . . . . We surely need not wonder that mist and all its phenomena have been made delightful to us, since our happiness as thinking beings must depend on our being content to accept only partial knowledge even in those matters which chiefly concern us. If we insist upon perfect intelligibility and complete declaration in every moral subject, we shall instantly fall into misery of unbelief. Our whole happiness and power of energetic action depend upon our being able to breathe and live in the cloud; content to see it

opening here, and closing there; rejoicing to catch through the thinnest films of it, glimpses of stable and substantial things; but yet perceiving a nobleness even in the concealment, and rejoicing that the kindly veil is spread where the untempered light might have scorched us, or the infinite clearness wearied. And I believe that the resentment of this interference of the mist is one of the forms of proud error which are too easily mistaken for virtues. To be content in utter darkness and ignorance is indeed unmanly, and therefore we think that to love light and find knowledge must always be right. Yet (as in all matters before observed,) wherever *pride* has any share in the work, even knowledge and light may be ill pursued. Knowledge is good, and light is good: yet man perished in seeking knowledge, and moths perish in seeking light; and if we, who are crushed before the moth, will not accept such mystery as is needful to us, we shall perish in like manner. But, accepted in humbleness, it instantly becomes an element of pleasure; and I think that every rightly constituted mind

ought to rejoice, not so much in knowing anything clearly, as in feeling that there is infinitely more which it cannot know. None but proud or weak men would mourn over this, for we may always know more, if we choose, by working on; but the pleasure is, I think, to humble people, in knowing that the journey is endless, the treasure inexhaustible,—watching the cloud still march before them with its summitless pillar, and being sure that, to the end of time, and to the length of eternity, the mysteries of its infinity will still open farther and farther, their dimness being the sign and necessary adjunct of their inexhaustibleness. I know there are an evil mystery, and a deathful dimness,—the mystery of the great Babylon—the dimness of the sealed eye and soul; but do not let us confuse these with the glorious mystery of the things which the "angels desire to look into," or with the dimness which, even before the clear eye and open soul, still rests on sealed pages of the eternal volume.

25. On some isolated mountain at day-

break,* when the night mists first rise from off the plain, watch their white and lakelike fields, as they float in level bays, and winding gulfs, about the islanded summits of the lower hills, untouched yet by more than dawn, colder and more quiet than a windless sea under the moon of midnight; watch when the first sunbeam is sent upon the silver channels, how the foam of their undulating surface parts, and passes away, and down under their depths the glittering city and green pastures lie like Atlantis, between the white paths of winding rivers; the flakes of light falling every moment faster and broader among the starry spires, as the wreathed surges break and vanish above them, and the confused crests and ridges of the dark hills shorten their grey shadows upon the plain. Wait a little longer, and you

* I forget now what all this is about. It seems to be a recollection of the Rigi, with assumption that the enthusiastic spectator is to stand for a day and night in observation; to suffer the effects of a severe thunder-storm, and to get neither breakfast nor dinner. I have seen such a storm on the Rigi, however, and more than one such sunrise; and I much doubt if its present visitors by rail will see more.

shall see those scattered mists rallying in the ravines, and floating up towards you, along the winding valleys, till they crouch in quiet masses, iridescent with the morning light, upon the broad breasts of the higher hills, whose leagues of massy undulation will melt back, back into that robe of material light, until they fade away, lost in its lustre, to appear again above in the serene heaven like a wild, bright, impossible dream, foundationless, and inaccessible, their very bases vanishing in the unsubstantial and mocking blue of the deep lake below. Wait yet a little longer, and you shall see those mists gather themselves into white towers, and stand like fortresses along the promontories, massy and motionless, only piled, with every instant, higher and higher into the sky, and casting longer shadows athwart the rocks; and out of the pale blue of the horizon you will see forming and advancing a troop of narrow, dark, pointed vapours, which will cover the sky, inch by inch, with their grey network, and take the light off the landscape with an eclipse which will stop the singing of the birds, and the motion of the leaves, together;—and then you will

see horizontal bars of black shadow forming under them, and lurid wreaths create themselves, you know not how, among the shoulders of the hills ; you never see them form, but when you look back to a place which was clear an instant ago, there is a cloud on it, hanging by the precipice, as a hawk pauses over his prey ;—and then you will hear the sudden rush of the awakened wind, and you will see those watch-towers of vapour swept away from their foundations, and waving curtains of opaque rain, let down to the valley, swinging from the burdened clouds in black bending fringes, or, pacing in pale columns along the lake level, grazing its surface into foam as they go. And then, as the sun sinks, you shall see the storm drift for an instant from off the hills, leaving their broad sides smoking and loaded yet with snow-white, torn, steam-like rags of capricious vapour, now gone, now gathered again,—while the smouldering sun, seeming not far away, but burning like a red-hot ball beside you, and as if you could reach it, plunges through the rushing wind and rolling cloud with headlong fall, as if it meant to rise no more, dyeing all

the air about it with blood;—and then you shall hear the fainting tempest die in the hollow of the night, and you shall see a green halo kindling on the summit of the eastern hills, brighter, brighter yet, till the large white circle of the slow moon is lifted up among the barred clouds, step by step, line by line; star after star she quenches with her kindling light, setting in their stead an army of pale, penetrable, fleecy wreaths in the heaven, to give light upon the earth, which move together hand in hand, company by company, troop by troop, so measured in their unity of motion that the whole heaven seems to roll with them, and the earth to reel under them. And then wait yet for one hour, until the east again becomes purple, and the heaving mountains, rolling against it in darkness, like waves of a wild sea, are drowned one by one in the glory of its burning; watch the white glaciers blaze in their winding paths about the mountains, like mighty serpents with scales of fire: watch the columnar peaks of solitary snow, kindling downwards chasm by chasm, each in itself a new morning—their long avalanches cast down

in keen streams brighter than the lightning, sending each his tribute of driven snow, like altar-smoke, up to heaven; the rose-light of their silent domes flushing that heaven about them, and above them, piercing with purer light through its purple lines of lifted cloud, casting a new glory on every wreath, as it passes by, until the whole heaven, one scarlet canopy, is interwoven with a roof of waving flame, and tossing vault beyond vault, as with the drifted wings of many companies of angels: and then, when you can look no more for gladness, and when you are bowed down with fear and love of the Maker and Doer of this, tell me who has best delivered this His message unto men!

26. *The account given of the stages of creation in the first chapter of Genesis is in every respect clear and intelligible to the simplest reader, except in the statement of the work of the second day. I suppose that this statement

* This passage, to the end of the section, is one of the last, and best, which I wrote in the temper of my youth; and I can still ratify it, thus far, that the texts referred to in it must either be received as it explains them, or neglected altogether.

is passed over by careless readers without any endeavour to understand it, and contemplated by simple and faithful readers as a sublime mystery which was not intended to be understood. But there is no mystery in any other part of the chapter, and it seems to me unjust to conclude that any was intended here. And the passage ought to be peculiarly interesting to us, as being the first in the Bible in which the heavens are named, and the only one in which the word "Heaven," all-important as that word is to our understanding of the most precious promises of Scripture, receives a definite explanation. Let us therefore see whether, by a little careful comparison of the verse with other passages in which the word occurs, we may not be able to arrive at as clear an understanding of this portion of the chapter as of the rest. In the first place the English word, "Firmament," itself is obscure and useless; because we never employ it but as a synonym of heaven, it conveys no other distinct idea to us; and the verse, though from our familiarity with it we imagine that it possesses meaning, has in reality no more point nor value than if it

were written, "God said, Let there be a something in the midst of the waters, and God called the something, Heaven." But the marginal reading, "Expansion," has definite value; and the statement that "God said, Let there be an expansion in the midst of the waters, and God called the expansion, Heaven," has an apprehensible meaning. Accepting this expression as the one intended, we have next to ask what expansion there is, between two waters, describable by the term "heaven." Milton adopts the term "expanse," but he understands it of the whole volume of the air which surrounds the earth. Whereas, so far as we can tell, there is no water beyond the air, in the fields of space; and the whole expression of division of waters from waters is thus rendered valueless. Now with respect to this whole chapter, we must remember always that it is intended for the instruction of all mankind, not for the learned reader only; and that therefore the most simple and natural interpretation is the likeliest in general to be the true one. An unscientific reader knows little about the manner in which the volume of the atmosphere

surrounds the earth; but I imagine that he could hardly glance at the sky when rain was falling in the distance, and see the level line of the bases of the clouds from which the shower descended, without being able to attach an instant and easy meaning to the words, "expansion in the midst of the waters;" and if, having once seized this idea, he proceeded to examine it more accurately, he would perceive at once, if he had ever noticed *anything* of the nature of clouds, that the level line of their bases did indeed most severely and stringently divide "waters from waters"—that is to say, divide water in its collective and tangible state, from water in its aërial state; or the waters which *fall*, and *flow*, from those which *rise*, and *float*. Next, if we try this interpretation in the theological sense of the word *heaven*, and examine whether the clouds are spoken of as God's dwelling-place, we find God going before the Israelites in a pillar of cloud; revealing Himself in a cloud on Sinai; appearing in a cloud on the mercy-seat; filling the Temple of Solomon with the cloud when its dedication is accepted; appearing in a great

cloud to Ezekiel; ascending into a cloud before the eyes of the disciples on Mount Olivet; and in like manner returning to judgment: "Behold He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him." "Then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." While, further, the "clouds" and "heavens" are used as interchangeable words in those psalms which most distinctly set forth the power of God: "He bowed the heavens also, and came down; He made darkness pavilions round about Him, dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies." And again, "Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens, and Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds." And again, "His excellency is over Israel, and His strength is in the clouds." And again, "The clouds poured out water, the skies sent out a sound, the voice of Thy thunder was in the heaven." Again, "Clouds and darkness are round about Him, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne; the heavens declare His righteousness, and all the people see His glory." In all these passages the meaning is unmistakable if they possess

definite meaning at all. We are too apt to take them merely for sublime and vague imagery, and therefore gradually to lose the apprehension of their life and power. The expression, "He bowed the heavens," for instance, is, I suppose, received by most readers as a magnificent hyperbole, having reference to some peculiar and fearful manifestation of God's power to the writer of the psalm in which the words occur. But the expression either has *plain* meaning, or it has *no* meaning. Understand by the term "heavens" the compass of infinite space around the earth, and the expression "bowed the heavens," however sublime, is wholly without meaning: infinite space cannot be bent or bowed. But understand by the "heavens" the veil of clouds above the earth, and the expression is neither hyperbolical nor obscure; it is pure, plain, accurate truth, and it describes God, not as revealing Himself in any peculiar way to David, but doing what He is still doing before our own eyes, day by day. By accepting the words in their simple sense, we are thus led to apprehend the immediate presence of the Deity, and His purpose of

manifesting Himself as near us whenever the storm-cloud stoops upon its course; while by our vague and inaccurate acceptance of the words, we remove the idea of His presence far from us, into a region which we can neither see nor know: and gradually, from the close realization of a living God, who "maketh the clouds His chariot," we define and explain ourselves into dim and distant suspicion of an inactive God inhabiting inconceivable places, and fading into the multitudinous formalisms of the laws of Nature. All errors of this kind—and in the present day we are in constant and grievous danger of falling into them—arise from the originally mistaken idea that man can, "by searching, find out God—find out the Almighty to perfection"—that is to say, by help of courses of reasoning and accumulations of science, apprehend the nature of the Deity, in a more exalted and more accurate manner than in a state of comparative ignorance; whereas it is clearly necessary, from the beginning to the end of time, that God's way of revealing Himself to His creatures should be a *simple* way, which *all* those creatures may

understand. Whether taught or untaught, whether of mean capacity or enlarged, it is necessary that communion with their Creator should be possible to all; and the admission to such communion must be rested, not on their having a knowledge of astronomy, but on their having a human soul. In order to render this communion possible, the Deity has stooped from His throne, and has, not only in the person of the Son, taken upon Him the veil of our human *flesh*, but, in the person of the Father, taken upon Him the veil of our human *thoughts*, and permitted us, by His own spoken authority, to conceive Him simply and clearly as a loving father and friend; a being to be walked with and reasoned with, to be moved by our entreaties, angered by our rebellion, alienated by our coldness, pleased by our love, and glorified by our labour; and, finally, to be beheld in immediate and active presence in all the powers and changes of creation. This conception of God, which is the child's, is evidently the only one which can be universal, and, therefore, the only one which *for us* can be true. The moment that, in our pride of heart, we refuse to

accept the condescension of the Almighty, and desire Him, instead of stooping to hold our hands, to rise up before us into His glory, we hoping that, by standing on a grain of dust or two of human knowledge higher than our fellows, we may behold the Creator as He rises, —God takes us at our word. He rises into His own invisible and inconceivable majesty; He goes forth upon the ways which are not our ways, and retires into the thoughts which are not our thoughts; and we are left alone. And presently we say in our vain hearts, "There is no God."

I would desire, therefore, to receive God's account of His own creation as under the ordinary limits of human knowledge and imagination it would be received by a simple-minded man; and finding that "the heavens and the earth" are spoken of always as having something like equal relation to each other, ("Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them,") I reject at once all idea of the term "heavens" being intended to signify the infinity of space inhabited by countless worlds; for between those infinite

heavens and the particle of sand, which not the earth only, but the sun itself, with all the solar system, is, in relation to them, no relation of equality or comparison could be inferred. But I suppose the heavens to mean that part of creation which holds equal companionship with our globe; I understand the "rolling of these heavens together as a scroll," to be an equal and relative destruction with the melting of the elements in fervent heat; and I understand the making of the firmament to signify that, so far as man is concerned, most magnificent ordinance of the clouds;—the ordinance that, as the great plain of waters was formed on the face of the earth, so also a plain of waters should be stretched along the height of air, and the face of the cloud answer the face of the ocean; and that this upper and heavenly plain should be of waters, as it were, glorified in their nature, no longer quenching the fire, but now bearing fire in their own bosoms; no longer murmuring only when the winds raise them or rocks divide, but answering each other with their own voices, from pole to pole; no longer restrained by established shores, and

guided through unchanging channels, but going forth at their pleasure like the armies of the angels, and choosing their encampments upon the heights of the hills; no longer hurried downwards for ever, moving but to fall, nor lost in the lightless accumulation of the abyss, but covering the east and west with the waving of their wings, and robing the gloom of the farther infinite with a vesture of diverse colours, of which the threads are purple and scarlet, and the embroideries flame.

This I believe is the ordinance of the firmament; and it seems to me that in the midst of the material nearness of these heavens, God means us to acknowledge His own immediate presence as visiting, judging, and blessing us: "The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God." "He doth set His bow in the clouds," and thus renews, in the sound of every drooping swathe of rain, His promises of everlasting love. "In them hath He set a *tabernacle* for the sun;" whose burning ball, which, without the firmament, would be seen but as an intolerable and scorching circle in the blackness of vacuity,

is by that firmament surrounded with gorgeous service, and tempered by mediatorial ministries: by the firmament of clouds the temple is built, for his presence to fill with light at noon; by the firmament of clouds the purple veil is closed at evening, round the sanctuary of his rest; by the mists of the firmament his implacable light is divided, and its separated fierceness appeased into the soft blue that fills the depth of distance with its bloom, and the flush with which the mountains burn, as they drink the overflowing of the dayspring. And in this tabernacling of the unendurable sun with men, through the shadows of the firmament, God would seem to set forth the stooping of His own Majesty to men, upon the throne of the firmament. As the Creator of all the worlds, and the Inhabiter of eternity, we cannot behold Him; but as the Judge of the earth and the Preserver of men, those heavens are indeed His dwelling-place: "Swear not, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool!" And all those passings to and fro of fruitful showers and grateful shade, and all those visions of silver palaces built about

the horizon, and voices of moaning winds and threatening thunders, and glories of coloured robe and cloven ray, are but to deepen in our hearts the acceptance, and distinctness, and dearness of the simple words, "Our Father, which art in heaven."

SECTION IV.

ILLUSTRATIVE: STREAMS AND SEA.

27. Of all inorganic substances, acting in their own proper nature, and without assistance and combination, water is the most wonderful. If we think of it as the source of all the changefulness and beauty which we have seen in clouds,—then, as the instrument by which the earth we have contemplated was modelled into symmetry, and its crags chiselled into grace;—then, as in the form of snow, it robes the mountains it has made with that transcendent light which we could not have conceived if we had not seen;—then, as it exists in the foam of the torrent, in the iris which spans it, in the morning mist which rises from it, in the deep crystalline pools which mirror its hanging shore, in the broad lake and glancing river;—finally, in that which is to all human minds the best emblem of unwearied, unconquerable power

the wild, various, fantastic, tameless unity of the sea;—what shall we compare to this mighty, this universal element, for glory and beauty? or how shall we follow its eternal changefulness of feeling? It is like trying to paint a soul!

28. The great angel of the sea—rain; the angel, observe,—the messenger sent to a special place on a special errand. Not the diffused, perpetual presence of the burden of mist, but the going and returning of the intermittent cloud. All turns upon that intermittence. Soft moss on stone and rock; cave fern of tangled glen; wayside well—perennial, patient, silent, clear, stealing through its square font of rough-hewn stone; ever thus deep, no more;—which the winter wreck sullies not, the summer thirst wastes not, incapable of stain as of decline;—where the fallen leaf floats undecayed, and the insect darts undefiling: cressed brook and ever-eddying river, lifted even in flood scarcely over its stepping stones,—but through all sweet summer keeping tremulous music with harp-strings of dark water among the silver fingering of the pebbles. Far away in the south the

strong river gods have all hasted, and gone down to the sea. Wasted and burning, white furnaces of blasting sand, their broad beds lie ghastly and bare; but here in the moss lands, the soft wings of the sea angel droop still with dew, and the shadows of their plumes falter on the hills; strange laughings and glitterings of silver streamlets, born suddenly, and twined about the mossy heights in trickling tinsel, answering to them as they wave.

29. Stand for half an hour beside the fall of Schaffhausen, on the north side, where the rapids are long, and watch how the vault of water first bends unbroken, in pure polished velocity, over the arching rocks at the brow of the cataract, covering them with a dome of crystal twenty feet thick, so swift that its motion is unseen except when a foam globe from above darts over it like a falling star; and how the trees are lighted above it under all their leaves,* at the instant that it breaks into foam; and how all the hollows of that

* Well noticed. The drawing of the fall of Schaffhausen, which I made at the time of writing this

foam burn with green fire like so much shattering chrysoprase; and how, ever and anon startling you with its white flash, a jet of spray leaps hissing out of the fall, like a rocket, bursting in the wind and driven away in dust, filling the air with light; and how through the curdling wreaths of the restless crashing abyss below, the blue of the water, paled by the foam in its body, shows purer than the sky through white rain-cloud, while the shuddering iris stoops in tremulous stillness over all, fading and flushing alternately through the choking spray and shattered sunshine, hiding itself at last among the thick golden leaves which toss to and fro in sympathy with the wild water,—their dripping masses lifted at intervals, like sheaves of loaded corn, by some stronger gush from the cataract, and bowed again upon the mossy rocks as its roar dies away,—the dew gushing from their thick branches through drooping clusters of emerald herbage, and sparkling in white threads along

study, was one of the very few, either by other draughtsmen or myself, which I have seen Turner pause at with serious attention.

the dark rocks of the shore, feeding the lichens, which chase and chequer them with purple and silver.

30. Close beside the path by which travellers ascend the Montanvert from the valley of Chamouni, on the right hand, where it first begins to rise among the pines, there descends a small stream from the foot of the granite peak known to the guides as the Aiguille Charmoz. It is concealed from the traveller by a thicket of alder, and its murmur is hardly heard, for it is one of the weakest streams of the valley. But it is a constant stream, fed by a permanent, though small, glacier; and continuing to flow even to the close of summer, when more copious torrents, depending only on the melting of the lower snows, have left their beds,—"stony channels in the sun." The long drought which took place in the autumn of 1854, sealing every source of waters except these perpetual ones, left the torrent of which I am speaking, and such others, in a state peculiarly favourable to observance of their *least* action on the mountains from which

they descend. They were entirely limited to their own ice fountains, and the quantity of powdered rock which they brought down was, of course, at its minimum, being nearly unmingled with any earth derived from the dissolution of softer soil, or vegetable mould, by rains. At three in the afternoon, on a warm day in September, when the torrent had reached its average maximum strength for the day, I filled an ordinary Bordeaux wine flask with the water where it was least turbid. From this quart of water I obtained twenty-four grains of sand and sediment more or less fine. I cannot estimate the quantity of water in the stream; but the runlet of it at which I filled the flask was giving about two hundred bottles a minute, or rather more, carrying down, therefore, about three quarters of a pound of powdered granite every minute. This would be forty-five pounds an hour; but allowing for the inferior power of the stream in the cooler periods of the day, and taking into consideration, on the other side, its increased power in rain, we may, I think, estimate its average hour's work at twenty-eight or thirty pounds,

or a hundredweight every four hours. By this insignificant runlet, therefore, rather more than two tons of the substance of the Mont Blanc are displaced and carried down a certain distance every week; and as it is only for three or four months that the flow of the stream is checked by frost, we may certainly allow eighty tons for the mass which it annually moves. It is not worth while to enter into any calculation of the relation borne by this runlet to the great torrents which descend from the chain of Mont Blanc into the valley of Chamouni.* I but take this quantity, eighty tons, as the result of the labour of a scarcely noticeable runlet at the side of one of them, utterly irrespective of all sudden falls of stones and of masses of mountain (a single thunderbolt will sometimes leave a scar on the flank of a soft rock looking like a trench for a railroad), and we shall then begin to apprehend something

* I have slightly modified and abridged what follows, being impatient of its prolixity, as well as ashamed of what is truly called the ludicrous underestimate of the mass of the larger streams.

of the operation of the great laws of change which are the conditions of all material existence, however apparently enduring. The hills, which, as compared with living beings, seem "everlasting," are in truth as perishing as they; its veins of flowing fountain weary the mountain heart, as the crimson pulse does ours; the natural force of the iron crag is abated in its appointed time, like the strength of the sinews in a human old age; and it is but the lapse of the longer years of decay which, in the sight of its Creator, distinguishes the mountain range from the moth and the worm.

31. Few people, comparatively, have ever seen the effect on the sea of a powerful gale continued without intermission for three or four days and nights; and to those who have not, I believe it must be unimaginable, not from the mere force or size of surge, but from the complete annihilation of the limit between sea and air. The water, from its prolonged agitation, is beaten, not into mere creamy foam, but into masses of accumulated yeast, which hang in

ropes and wreaths from wave to wave; and where one curls over to break, form a festoon like a drapery from its edge; these are taken up by the wind, not in dissipating dust, but bodily, in writhing, hanging, coiling masses, which make the air white, and thick as with snow, only the flakes are a foot or two long each; the surges themselves are full of foam in their very bodies, underneath, making them white all through, as the water is under a great cataract,—and their masses, being thus half water and half air, are torn to pieces by the wind whenever they rise, and carried away in roaring smoke, which chokes and strangles like actual water. Add to this, that when the air has been exhausted of its moisture by long rain, the spray of the sea is caught by it as described above, and covers its surface not merely with the smoke of finely divided water, but with boiling mist: imagine also the low rain-clouds brought down to the very level of the sea, as I have often seen them, whirling and flying in rags and fragments from wave to wave; and finally conceive the surges themselves in their utmost pitch of power, velocity,

vastness, and madness, lifting themselves in precipices and peaks furrowed with their whirl of ascent, through all this chaos; and you will understand that there is indeed no distinction left between the sea and air; that no object, nor horizon, nor any landmark, or natural evidence of position is left; that the heaven is all spray, and the ocean all cloud, and that you can see no farther in any direction than you could see through a cataract.*

* The whole of this was written merely to show the meaning of Turner's picture of the steamer in distress, throwing up signals. It is a good study of wild weather; but, separate from its aim, utterly feeble in comparison to the few words by which any of the great poets will describe sea, when they have got to do it. I am rather proud of the short sentence in the 'Harbours of England,' describing a great breaker against rock:—"One moment, a flint cave,—the next, a marble pillar,—the next, a fading cloud." But there is nothing in sea-description, detailed, like Dickens' storm at the death of Ham, in 'David Copperfield.'

SECTION V.

ILLUSTRATIVE : MOUNTAINS.

32. The words which marked for us the purpose of the clouds are followed immediately by those notable ones,—"And God said, Let the waters which are under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." We do not, perhaps, often enough consider the deep signification of this sentence. We are too apt to receive it as the description of an event vaster only in its extent, not in its nature, than the compelling of the Red Sea to draw back that Israel might pass by. We imagine the Deity in like manner rolling the waves of the greater ocean together on an heap, and setting bars and doors to them eternally. But there is a far deeper meaning than this in the solemn words of Genesis, and in the correspondent verse of the Psalm, "His hands prepared the dry land." Up to that moment the earth had been *void;* for, it had been *without*

form. The command that the waters should be gathered, was the command that the earth should be *sculptured.* The sea was not driven to its place in suddenly restrained rebellion, but withdrawn to its place in perfect and patient obedience. The dry land appeared, not in level sands forsaken by the surges, which those surges might again claim for their own; but in range beyond range of swelling hill and iron rock, for ever to claim kindred with the firmament, and be companioned by the clouds of heaven.

What space of time was in reality occupied by the "day" of Genesis, is not at present of any importance for us to consider. By what furnaces of fire the adamant was melted, and by what wheels of earthquake it was torn, and by what teeth of glacier and weight of sea-waves it was engraven and finished into its perfect form, we may, perhaps, hereafter endeavour to conjecture; but here, as in few words the work is summed by the historian, so in few broad thoughts it should be comprehended by us; and, as we read the mighty sentence, "Let the dry land appear," we should try

to follow the finger of God as it engraved upon the stone tables of the earth the letters and the law of its everlasting form, as gulf by gulf the channels of the deep were ploughed; and cape by cape the lines were traced with Divine foreknowledge of the shores that were to limit the nations; and chain by chain the mountain walls were lengthened forth, and their foundations fastened for ever; and the compass was set upon the face of the depth, and the fields and the highest part of the dust of the world were made; and the right hand of Christ first strewed the snow on Lebanon, and smoothed the slopes of Calvary.

It is not, I repeat, always needful, in many respects it is not possible, to conjecture the manner or the time in which this work was done; but it is deeply necessary for all men to consider the magnificence of the accomplished purpose, and the depth of the wisdom and love which are manifested in the ordinances of the hills. For observe, in order to bring the world into the form which it now bears, it was not mere *sculpture* that was needed; the mountains could not stand for a day unless they

were formed of materials altogether different from those which constitute the lower hills, and the surfaces of the valleys. A harder substance had to be prepared for every mountain chain, yet not so hard but that it might be capable of crumbling down into earth fit to nourish the Alpine forest, and the Alpine flower; not so hard but that in the midst of the utmost majesty of its enthroned strength there should be seen on it the seal of death, and the writing of the same sentence that had gone forth against the human frame, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." And with this perishable substance the most majestic forms were to be framed that were consistent with the safety of man; and the peak was to be lifted and the cliff rent, as high and as steeply as was possible, in order yet to permit the shepherd to feed his flocks upon the slopes, and the cottage to nestle beneath their shadow. And observe, two distinct ends were to be accomplished in doing this. It was, indeed, absolutely necessary that such eminences should be created, in order to fit the earth in any wise for human habitation; for without mountains

the air could not be purified, nor the flowing of the rivers sustained, and the earth must have become for the most part plain, or stagnant marsh. But the feeding of the rivers and the purifying of the winds, are the least of the services appointed to the hills. To fill the thirst of the human heart for the beauty of God's working—to startle its lethargy with the deep and pure agitation of astonishment,—are their higher missions. They are as a great and noble architecture, first giving shelter, comfort, and rest; and covered also with mighty sculpture and painted legend. It is impossible to examine, in their connected system, the features of even the most ordinary mountain scenery, without concluding that it has been prepared in order to unite as far as possible, and in the closest compass, every means of delighting and sanctifying the heart of man: "as far as *possible*,"—that is, as far as is consistent with the fulfilment of the sentence of condemnation on the whole earth. Death must be upon the hills; and the cruelty of the tempests smite them, and the briar and thorn spring up upon them; but they so smite as to bring their rocks into the

fairest forms, and so spring as to make the very desert blossom as the rose. Even among our own hills of Scotland and Cumberland, though often too barren to be perfectly beautiful, and always too low to be perfectly sublime, it is strange how many deep sources of delight are gathered into the compass of their glens and vales; and how, down to the most secret cluster of their far-away flowers, and the idlest leap of their straying streamlets, the whole heart of Nature seems thirsting to give, and still to give, shedding forth her everlasting beneficence with a profusion so patient, so passionate, that our utmost observance and thankfulness are but, at last, neglects of her nobleness, and apathy to her love. But among the true mountains of the greater orders, the Divine purpose of appeal at once to all the faculties of the human spirit becomes still more manifest. Inferior hills ordinarily interrupt, in some degree, the richness of the valleys at their feet; the grey downs of southern England and treeless côteaux of central France, and grey swells of Scottish moor, whatever peculiar charm they may possess in themselves, are at

least destitute of those which belong to the woods and fields of the lowlands. But the great mountains *lift* the lowlands on *their sides.* Let the reader imagine first the appearance of the most varied plain of some richly cultivated country; let him imagine it dark with graceful woods, and soft with deepest pastures; let him fill the space of it, to the utmost horizon, with innumerable and changeful incidents of scenery and life; leading pleasant streamlets through its meadows, strewing clusters of cottages beside their banks, tracing sweet footpaths through its avenues, and animating its fields with happy flocks, and slow wandering spots of cattle; and when he has wearied himself with endless imagining, and left no space without some loveliness of its own, let him conceive all this great plain, with its infinite treasures of natural beauty, and happy human life, gathered up in God's hands from one edge of the horizon to the other, like a woven garment, and shaken into deep falling folds, as the robes droop from a king's shoulders; all its bright rivers leaping into cataracts along the hollows of its fall, and all its forests rearing

themselves aslant against its slopes, as a rider rears himself back when his horse plunges, and all its villages nestling themselves into the new windings of its glens, and all its pastures thrown into steep waves of greensward, dashed with dew along the edges of their folds, and sweeping down into endless slopes, with a cloud here and there lying quietly, half on the grass, half in the air,—and he will have as yet, in all this lifted world, only the foundation of one of the great Alps. And whatever is lovely in the lowland scenery, becomes lovelier in this change; the trees which grew heavily and stiffly from the level line of plain, assume strange curves of strength and grace as they bend themselves against the mountain side; they breathe more freely and toss their branches more carelessly as each climbs higher, looking to the clear light above the topmost leaves of its brother tree; the flowers which on the arable plain fall before the plough, now find out for themselves unapproachable places where year by year they gather into happier fellowship, and fear no evil; and the streams which in the level land crept in dark eddies by unwholesome

banks, now move in showers of silver, and are clothed with rainbows, and bring health and life wherever the glance of their waves can reach. . . .

It may not, therefore, be altogether profitless or unnecessary to review briefly the nature of the three great offices which mountain ranges are appointed to fulfil, in order to preserve the health and increase the happiness of mankind. Their first use is, of course, to give motion to water. Every fountain and river, from the inch-deep streamlet that crosses the village lane in trembling clearness, to the massy and silent march of the everlasting multitude of waters in Amazon or Ganges, owe their play, and purity, and power, to the ordained elevations of the earth. Gentle or steep, extended or abrupt, some determined slope of the earth's surface is of course necessary before any wave can so much as overtake one sedge in its pilgrimage; and how seldom do we enough consider, as we walk beside the margins of our pleasant brooks, how beautiful and wonderful is that ordinance, of which every blade of grass that waves in their clear water is a perpetual sign—that the dew

and rain fallen on the face of the earth shall find no resting-place; shall find, on the contrary, fixed channels traced for them from the ravines of the central crests down which they roar, in sudden ranks of foam, to the dark hollows beneath the banks of lowland pasture, round which they must circle slowly among the stems and beneath the leaves of the lilies; paths prepared for them by which, at some appointed rate of journey, they must evermore descend, sometimes slow, and sometimes swift, but never pausing; the daily portion of the earth they have to glide over marked for them at each successive sunrise, the place which has known them knowing them no more, and the gateways of guarding mountains opened for them in cleft and chasm, none letting them in their pilgrimage; and, from afar off, the great heart of the sea calling them to itself! "Deep calleth unto deep." I know not which of the two is the more wonderful,—that calm, gradated, invisible slope of the champaign land, which gives motion to the stream; or that passage cloven for it through the ranks of hill, which, necessary for the health of the land

immediately around them, would yet, unless so supernaturally divided, have fatally intercepted the flow of the waters from far-off countries. When did the great spirit of the river first knock at these adamantine gates? When did the porter open to it, and cast his keys away for ever, lapped in whirling sand? I am not satisfied—no one should be satisfied—with that vague answer, The river cut its way. Not so. The river *found* its way. * I do not see that rivers in their own strength can do much in cutting their way; they are nearly as apt to choke their channels up as to carve them out. Only give a river some little sudden power in a valley, and see how it will use it. Cut itself a bed? Not so, by any means, but fill up its bed; and look for another in a wild, dissatisfied, inconsistent manner,—any way rather than the old one will better please it; and even if it is banked up and forced to keep to the old one, it will not deepen, but do all it can to raise it, and leap

* I attach great importance to the remaining contents of this passage, and have had occasion to insist on them at great length in recent lectures at Oxford.

out of it. And although wherever water has a steep fall it will swiftly cut itself a bed deep into the rock or ground, it will not, when the rock is hard, cut a wider channel than it actually needs; so that if the existing river beds, through ranges of mountains, had in reality been cut by the streams, they would be found, wherever the rocks are hard, only in the form of narrow and profound ravines, like the well-known channel of the Niagara, below the fall; not in that of extended valleys. And the actual work of true mountain rivers, though often much greater in proportion to their body of water than that of the Niagara, is quite insignificant when compared with the area and depth of the valleys through which they flow; so that, although in many cases it appears that those larger valleys have been excavated at earlier periods by more powerful streams, or by the existing stream in a more powerful condition, still the great fact remains always equally plain, and equally admirable, that, whatever the nature and duration of the agencies employed, the earth was so shaped at first as to direct the currents of its rivers in the manner most

healthy and convenient for man. The valley of the Rhone may have been in great part excavated, in early times, by torrents a thousand times larger than the Rhone; but it could not have been excavated at all, unless the mountains had been thrown at first into two chains, by which the torrents were set to work in a given direction. And it is easy to conceive how, under any less beneficent dispositions of their masses of hill, the continents of the earth might either have been covered with enormous lakes, as parts of North America actually are covered; or have become wildernesses of pestiferous marsh; or lifeless plains, upon which the water would have dried as it fell, leaving them for great part of the year desert. Such districts do exist, and exist in vastness; the whole earth is not prepared for the habitation of man; only certain small portions are prepared for him,—the houses, as it were, of the human race, from which they are to look abroad upon the rest of the world; not to wonder or complain that it is not all house, but to be grateful for the kindness of the admirable building, in the house

itself, as compared with the rest. It would be as absurd to think it an evil that all the world is not fit for us to inhabit, as to think it an evil that the globe is no larger than it is. As much as we shall ever need is evidently assigned to us for our dwelling-place; the rest, covered with rolling waves or drifting sands, fretted with ice or crested with fire, is set before us for contemplation in an uninhabitable magnificence. And that part which we are enabled to inhabit owes its fitness for human life chiefly to its mountain ranges, which, throwing the superfluous rain off as it falls, collect it in streams or lakes, and guide it into given places, and in given directions; so that men can build their cities in the midst of fields which they know will be always fertile, and establish the lines of their commerce upon streams which will not fail.

Nor is this giving of motion to water to be considered as confined only to the surface of the earth. A no less important function of the hills is in directing the flow of the fountains and springs from subterranean reservoirs. There is no miraculous springing up of water out of

the ground at our feet; but every fountain and well is supplied from reservoirs among the hills, so placed as to involve some slight fall or pressure enough to secure the constant flowing of the stream; and the incalculable blessing of the power given to us, in most valleys, of reaching by excavation some point whence the water will rise to the surface of the ground in perennial flow, is entirely owing to the concave dispositions of the beds of clay or rock raised from beneath the bosom of the valley into ranks of enclosing hills.

The second great use of mountains is to maintain a constant change in the currents and nature of the *air*. Such change would, of course, have been partly caused by difference in soil and vegetation, even if the earth had been level; but to a far less extent than it is now by the chains of hills which—exposing on one side their masses of rock to the full heat of the sun, (increased by the angle at which the rays strike on the slope,) and on the other casting a soft shadow for leagues over the plains at their feet—divide the earth not only into districts, but into climates; and cause

perpetual currents of air to traverse their passes in a thousand different states; moistening it with the spray of their waterfalls, sucking it down and beating it hither and thither in the pools of their torrents, closing it within clefts and caves, where the sunbeams never reach, till it is as cold as November mists; then sending it forth again to breathe lightly across the slopes of velvet fields, or to be scorched among sunburnt shales and grassless crags; then drawing it back in moaning swirls through clefts of ice, and up into dewy wreaths above the snow-fields; then piercing it with strange electric darts and flashes of mountain fire, and tossing it high in fantastic storm-cloud, as the dried grass is tossed by the mower, only suffering it to depart at last, when chastened and pure, to refresh the faded air of the far-off plains.

The third great use of mountains is to cause perpetual change in the *soils* of the earth. Without such provision the ground under cultivation would in a series of years become exhausted, and require to be upturned laboriously by the hand of man. But the elevations

of the earth's surface provide for it a perpetual renovation. The higher mountains suffer their summits to be broken into fragments, and to be cast down in sheets of massy rock, full, as we shall see presently, of every substance necessary for the nourishment of plants; these fallen fragments are again broken by frost, and ground by torrents, into various conditions of sand and clay—materials which are distributed perpetually by the streams farther and farther from the mountain's base. Every shower that swells the rivulet enables their waters to carry certain portions of earth into new positions, and exposes new banks of ground to be mined in their turn. That turbid foaming of the angry water,—that tearing down of bank and rock along the flanks of its fury,—are no disturbances of the kind course of nature; they are beneficent operations of laws necessary to the existence of man, and to the beauty of the earth. The process is continued more gently, but not less effectively, over all the surface of the lower undulating country; and each filtering thread of summer rain which trickles through the short turf of the uplands is bearing its own

appointed burden of earth to be thrown down on some new natural garden in the dingles beneath.

I have not spoken of the local and peculiar utilities of mountains. I do not count the benefit of the supply of summer streams from the moors of the higher ranges,—of the various medicinal plants which are nested among their rocks,—of the delicate pasturage which they furnish for cattle,—of the forests in which they bear timber for shipping,—the stones they supply for building, or the ores of metal which they collect into spots open to discovery, and easy for working. All these benefits are of a secondary or a limited nature. But the three great functions which I have just described, those of giving motion and change to water, air, and earth, are indispensable to human existence; they are operations to be regarded with as full a depth of gratitude as the laws which bid the tree bear fruit, or the seed multiply itself in the earth. And thus those desolate and threatening ranges of dark mountain, which in nearly all ages of the world men have looked upon with aversion, or with

terror, and shrunk back from as if they were haunted by perpetual images of death, are in reality sources of life and happiness far fuller and more beneficent than all the bright fruitfulness of the plain. The valleys only feed; the mountains feed, and guard, and strengthen us. We take our idea of fearlessness and sublimity alternately from the mountains and the sea; but we associate them unjustly. The sea-wave, with all its beneficence, is yet devouring and terrible; but the silent wave of the blue mountain is lifted towards heaven in a stillness of perpetual mercy; and the one surge, unfathomable in its darkness, the other unshaken in its faithfulness, for ever bear the seal of their appointed symbolism:—

"Thy *righteousness* is like the great mountains;

"Thy *judgments* are a great deep."

33. Mountains are to the rest of the body of the earth, what violent muscular action is to the body of man. The muscles and tendons of its anatomy are, in the mountain, brought out with force and convulsive energy, full of

expression, passion, and strength; the plains and the lower hills are the repose and the effortless motion of the frame, when its muscles lie dormant and concealed beneath the lines of its beauty,—yet ruling those lines in their every undulation. This then is the first grand principle of the truth of the earth. The spirit of the hills is action, that of the lowlands repose; and between these there is to be found every variety of motion and rest, from the inactive plain, sleeping like the firmament, with cities for stars, to the fiery peaks, which, with heaving bosoms and exulting limbs, with the clouds drifting like hair from their bright foreheads, lift up their Titan heads to Heaven, saying, "I live for ever."

34. Where they are,* they seem to form the world; no mere bank of a river here, or of a lane there, peeping out among the hedges

* Passage written after I had got by some years cooler and wiser than when I wrote No. 33, describing however the undulation of the gneiss rocks, which, 'where they are, seem to form the world.' in terms more fanciful than I now like.

or forests, but from the lowest valley to the highest clouds, all is theirs,—one adamantine dominion and rigid authority of rock. We yield ourselves to the impression of their eternal unconquerable stubbornness of strength; their mass seems the least yielding, least to be softened, or in anywise dealt with by external force, of all earthly substance. And behold, as we look further into it, it is all touched and troubled, like waves by a summer breeze; rippled far more delicately than seas or lakes are rippled; *they* only undulate along their surfaces—this rock trembles through its every fibre, like the chords of an Eolian harp, like the stillest air of spring, with the echoes of a child's voice. Into the heart of all those great mountains, through every tossing of their boundless crests, and deep beneath all their unfathomable defiles, flows that strange quivering of their substance. Other and weaker things seem to express their subjection to an Infinite Power only by momentary terrors: as the weeds bow down before the feverish wind, and the sound of the going in the tops of the taller trees passes on before the clouds, and the

fitful opening of pale spaces on the dark water, as if some invisible hand were casting dust abroad upon it, gives warning of the anger that is to come, we may well imagine that there is a fear passing upon the grass, and leaves, and waters, at the presence of some great spirit commissioned to let the tempest loose; but the terror passes, and their sweet rest is perpetually restored to the pastures and the waves. Not so to the mountains. They, which at first seem strengthened beyond the dread of any violence or change, are yet also ordained to bear upon them the symbol of a perpetual fear. The tremor which fades from the soft lake and gliding river is sealed to all eternity upon the rock; and while things that pass visibly from birth to death may sometimes forget their feebleness, the mountains are made to possess a perpetual memorial of their infancy—that infancy which the prophet saw in his vision,* —"I beheld the earth, and lo, it was without

* Utter misinterpretation of the passage. It is the old age, not the childhood of earth, which Jeremiah describes in this passage. See its true interpretation in 'Fors Clavigera,' Letter XLVI.

form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and lo, they *trembled*, and all the hills moved *lightly*."

35. The longer I stayed among the Alps, and the more closely I examined them, the more I was struck by the one broad fact of there being a vast Alpine plateau, or mass of elevated land, upon which nearly all the highest peaks stood like children set upon a table, removed, in most cases, far back from the edge of the plateau,—as if for fear of their falling; while the most majestic scenes in the Alps are produced, not so much by any violation of this law, as by one of the great peaks having apparently walked to the edge of the table to look over, and thus showing itself suddenly above the valley in its full height. This is the case with the Wetterhorn and Eiger at Grindelwald, and with the Grande Jorasse above the Col de Ferret. But the raised bank or table is always intelligibly in existence, even in these apparently exceptional cases; and for the most part, the great peaks are not allowed to come to the edge of it, but remain like the keeps of castles far

withdrawn, surrounded, league beyond league, by comparatively level fields of mountain, over which the lapping sheets of glacier writhe and flow, foaming about the feet of the dark central crests like the surf of an enormous sea-breaker hurled over a rounded rock, and islanding some fragment of it in the midst. And the result of this arrangement is a kind of division of the whole of Switzerland into an upper and lower mountain world,—the lower world consisting of rich valleys, bordered by steep, but easily accessible, wooded banks of mountain, more or less divided by ravines, through which glimpses are caught of the higher Alps; the upper world, reached after the first banks of 3,000 or 4,000 feet in height have been surmounted, consisting of comparatively level but most desolate tracts of moor and rock, half covered by glacier, and stretching to the feet of the true pinnacles of the chain. It can hardly be necessary to point out the perfect wisdom and kindness of this arrangement, as a provision for the safety of the inhabitants of the high mountain regions. If the great peaks rose at once from the deepest

valleys, every stone which was struck from their pinnacles, and every snow-wreath which slipped from their ledges, would descend at once upon the inhabitable ground, over which no year would pass without recording some calamity of earth-slip or avalanche; while in the course of their fall both the stones and the snow would strip the woods from the hill-sides, leaving only naked channels of destruction where there are now the sloping meadow and the chestnut glade. Besides this, the masses of snow, cast down at once into the warmer air, would all melt rapidly in the spring, causing furious inundation of every great river for a month or six weeks. The snow being then all thawed, except what lay upon the highest peaks in regions of nearly perpetual frost, the rivers would be supplied during the summer only by fountains, and the feeble tricklings on sunny days from the high snows. The Rhone, under such circumstances, would hardly be larger, in summer, than the Severn, and many Swiss valleys would be left almost without moisture. All these calamities are prevented by the peculiar Alpine structure which has been

described. The broken rocks and the sliding snow of the high peaks, instead of being dashed at once to the vales, are caught upon the desolate shelves, or shoulders, which everywhere surround the central crests. The soft banks which terminate these shelves, traversed by no falling fragments, clothe themselves with richest wood, while the masses of snow heaped upon the ledge above them, in a climate neither so warm as to thaw them quickly in the spring, nor so cold as to protect them from all the power of the summer sun, either form themselves into glaciers, or remain in slowly wasting fields even to the close of the year,—in either case supplying constant, abundant, and regular streams to the villages and pastures beneath, and to the rest of Europe, noble and navigable rivers.

Now, that such a structure is the best and wisest possible,* is indeed sufficient reason for its existence, and to many people it may seem useless to question farther respecting its origin. But I can hardly conceive any one

* Of course I had seen every other tried before giving this favourable judgment.

standing face to face with one of these towers of central rock, and yet not also asking himself, Is this indeed the actual first work of the Divine Master, on which I gaze? Was the great precipice shaped by His finger, as Adam was shaped out of the dust? Were its clefts and ledges carved upon it by its Creator, as the letters were on the tables of the law, and was it thus left to bear its eternal testimony to His beneficence among these clouds of Heaven? Or is it the descendant of a long race of mountains, existing under appointed laws of birth and endurance, death and decrepitude? There can be no doubt as to the answer. The rock itself answers audibly by the murmur of some falling stone or rending pinnacle. It is *not* as it was once. Those waste leagues around its feet are loaded with the wrecks of what it was. On these perhaps, of all mountains, the characters of decay are written most clearly; around these are spread most gloomily the memorials of their pride, and the signs of their humiliation.

What then were they once? The only answer is yet again—"Behold the cloud!"

36. There are many spots among the inferior ridges of the Alps, such as the Col de Ferret, the Col d'Anterne, and the associated ranges of the Buet, which, though commanding prospects of great nobleness, are themselves very nearly types of all that is most painful to the human mind. Vast wastes of mountain ground,* covered here and there with dull grey grass or moss, but breaking continually into black banks of shattered slate, all glistening and sodden with slow tricklings of clogged, incapable streams; the snow-water oozing through them in a cold sweat, and spreading itself in creeping stains among their dust; ever and anon a shaking here and there, and a handful or two of their particles or flakes trembling down, one sees not why, into more total dissolution, leaving a few jagged teeth, like the edges of knives eaten away by vinegar, projecting, through the half-dislodged mass, from

* This is a fourth volume passage,—and I will venture to say of it, as Albert Dürer, when he was pleased with his work—that for what it has to do, it cannot be much better done. It is a study on the Col de Bon Homme.

the inner rock; keen enough to cut the hand or foot that rests on them, yet crumbling as they wound, and soon sinking again into the smooth, slippery, glutinous heap; looking like a beach of black scales of dead fish cast ashore from a poisonous sea, and sloping away into foul ravines, branched down immeasurable slopes of barrenness, where the winds howl and wander continually, and the snow lies in wasted and sorrowful fields covered with sooty dust, that collects in streaks and stains at the bottom of all its thawing ripples.

I know of no other scenes so appalling as these in storm, or so woful in sunshine. Where, however, these same rocks exist in more favourable positions—that is to say, in gentler banks and at lower elevations—they form a ground for the most luxuriant vegetation; and the valleys of Savoy owe to them some of their loveliest solitudes—exquisitely rich pastures, interspersed with arable and orchard land, and shaded by groves of walnut and cherry. Scenes of this kind, and of that just described, so singularly opposed, and apparently brought together as foils to each

other, are however peculiar to certain beds of the slaty coherents, which are both vast in elevation, and easy of destruction. In Wales and Scotland the same groups of rocks possess far greater hardness, while they attain less elevation; and the result is a totally different aspect of scenery. The severity of the climate, and the comparative durableness of the rock, forbid the rich vegetation; but the exposed summits, though barren, are not subject to laws of destruction so rapid and fearful as in Switzerland, and the natural colour of the rock is oftener developed in the purples and greys which, mingled with the heather, form the principal elements of the deep and beautiful distant blue of the British hills. Their gentler mountain streams also permit the beds of rock to remain in firm, though fantastic, forms along their banks, and the gradual action of the cascades and eddies upon the slaty cleavage produces many pieces of foreground scenery to which higher hills can present no parallel.

37. Unlike Chamouni Aiguilles, there is no aspect of destruction about the Matterhorn

cliffs. They are not torn remnants of separating spires, yielding, flake by flake, and band by band, to the continual process of decay. They are, on the contrary, an unaltered monument, seemingly sculptured long ago, the huge walls retaining yet the forms into which they were first engraven, and standing like an Egyptian temple;—delicately fronted, softly coloured, the suns of uncounted ages rising and falling upon it continually, but still casting the same line of shadows from east to west; still, century after century, touching the same purple stains on the lotus pillars; while the desert sand ebbs and flows about their feet, as those autumn leaves of rock lie heaped and weak about the base of the Cervin.

Is not this a strange type in the very heart and height of these mysterious Alps—these wrinkled hills in their snowy, cold, grey-haired old age, at first so silent, then, as we keep quiet at their feet, muttering and whispering to us garrulously in broken and dreaming fits, as it were, about their childhood,—is it not a strange type of the things which "out of weakness are made strong"? If one of these

little flakes of mica sand, hurried in tremulous spangling along the bottom of the ancient river, too light to sink, too faint to float, almost too small for sight, could have had a mind given to it as it was at last borne down with its kindred dust into the abysses of the stream, and laid, (might it not have been thought ?) for a hopeless eternity, in the dark ooze, the most despised, forgotten, and feeble of all earth's atoms; incapable of any use or change; not fit, down there in the diluvial darkness, so much as to help an earth wasp to build its nest, or feed the first fibre of a lichen; what would it have thought, had it been told that one day, knitted into a strength as of imperishable iron, rustless by the air, infusible by the flame, out of the substance of it, with its fellows, the axe of God should hew that Alpine tower ?—that against *it*—poor, helpless mica flake !—the wild north winds should rage in vain; beneath *it*—low-fallen mica flake ! —the snowy hills should lie bowed like flocks of sheep, and the kingdoms of the earth fade away in unregarded blue; and around *it*—weak, wave-drifted mica flake !—the great war

of the firmament should burst in thunder and yet stir it not; and the fiery arrows and angry meteors of the night fall blunted back from it into the air; and all the stars in the clear heaven should light, one by one as they rose, new cressets upon the points of snow that fringed its abiding-place on the imperishable spire?

SECTION VI.

ILLUSTRATIVE: STONES.

38. THERE are no natural objects out of which more can be learned than out of stones. They seem to have been created especially to reward a patient observer. Nearly all other objects in nature can be seen to some extent without patience, and are pleasant even in being half seen. Trees, clouds, and rivers are enjoyable even by the careless; but the stone under his foot has, for carelessness, nothing in it but stumbling; no pleasure is languidly to be had out of it, nor food, nor good of any kind; nothing but symbolism of the hard heart, and the unfatherly gift. And yet, do but give it some reverence and watchfulness, and there is bread of thought in it, more than in any other lowly feature of all the landscape. For a stone, when it is examined, will be found a mountain in miniature. The fineness of Nature's work is so

great, that into a single block, a foot or two in diameter, she can compress as many changes of form and structure, on a small scale, as she needs for her mountains on a large one; and taking moss for forests, and grains of crystal for crags, the surface of a stone in by far the plurality of instances is more interesting than the surface of an ordinary hill; more fantastic in form, and incomparably richer in colour.

39. On a Highland hillside are multitudinous clusters of fern and heather; on an Alpine one, multitudinous groves of chestnut and pine. The number of the things may be the same, but the sense of infinity is in the latter case far greater, because the number is of nobler things. Indeed, so far as mere magnitude of space occupied on the field of the horizon is the measure of objects, a bank of earth ten feet high may, if we stoop to the foot of it, be made to occupy just as much of the sky as that bank of mountain at Villeneuve; nay, in many respects, its little ravines and escarpments, watched with some help of imagination, may become very sufficiently representative to us of those of the

great mountain; and in classing all water-worn mountain ground under the general and humble term of Banks, I mean to imply this relationship of structure between the smallest eminences and the highest. But in this matter of superimposed *quantity*, the distinctions of rank are at once fixed. The heap of earth bears its few tufts of moss, or knots of grass; the Highland or Cumberland mountain, its honeyed heathers or scented ferns; but the mass of the bank at Martigny or Villeneuve has a vineyard in every cranny of its rocks, and a chestnut grove on every crest of them. . . . The minute mounds and furrows scattered up the side of that great promontory, when they are actually approached after three or four hours' climbing, turn into independent hills, with true *parks* of lovely pasture-land enclosed among them, and avenue after avenue of chestnuts, walnuts, and pines bending round their bases; while in the deeper dingles, populous villages, literally bound down to the rock by enormous trunks of vine, which, first trained lightly over the loose stone roofs, have in process of years cast their fruitful net over the

whole village, and fastened it to the ground under their purple weight and wayward coils as securely as ever human heart was fastened to earth by the net of the Flatterer.

40. When a rock of any kind has lain for some time exposed to the weather, Nature finishes it in her own way. First she takes wonderful pains about its forms, sculpturing it into exquisite variety of dent and dimple, and rounding or hollowing it into contours which for fineness no human hand can follow; then she colours it; and every one of her touches of colour, instead of being a powder mixed with oil, is a minute forest of living trees, glorious in strength and beauty, and concealing wonders of structure.

41. On the broken rocks in the foreground in the crystalline groups, the mosses seem to set themselves consentfully and deliberately to the task of producing the most exquisite harmonies of colour in their power. They will not conceal the form of the rock, but will gather over it in little brown bosses, like small cushions of velvet, made of mixed threads of dark ruby silk and

gold, rounded over more subdued films of white and grey, with lightly crisped and curled edges like hoar frost on fallen leaves, and minute clusters of upright orange stalks with pointed caps, and fibres of deep green, and gold, and faint purple passing into black, all woven together, and following with unimaginable fineness of gentle growth the undulation of the stone they cherish, until it is charged with colour so that it can receive no more; and instead of looking rugged, or cold, or stern, or anything that a rock is held to be at heart, it seems to be clothed with a soft dark leopard's skin, embroidered with arabesque of purple and silver.

42. The colour of the white varieties of marble is of exquisite delicacy, owing to the partial translucency of the pure rock; and it has always appeared to me a most wonderful ordinance—one of the most *marked* pieces of purpose in the creation—that all the variegated kinds should be comparatively opaque, so as to set off the colour on the surface, while the white, which, if it had been opaque, would have looked somewhat coarse, (as for instance

common chalk does,) is rendered just translucent enough to give an impression of extreme purity, but not so translucent as to interfere in the least with the distinctness of any forms into which it is wrought. The colours of variegated marbles are also for the most part very beautiful, especially those composed of purple, amber, and green, with white; and there seems something notably attractive to the human mind in the *vague* and veined labyrinths of their arrangements.

43. I have often had occasion to allude to the apparent connection of brilliancy of colour with vigour of life or purity of substance. This is pre-eminently the case in the mineral kingdom. The perfection with which the particles of any substance unite in crystallization, corresponds in that kingdom to the vital power in organic nature; and it is a universal law, that according to the purity of any substance, and according to the energy of its crystallization, is its beauty or brightness. Pure earths are white when in powder; and the same earths, which are the constituents of clay and sand, form,

when crystallized, the emerald, ruby, sapphire, amethyst, and opal.

44. As we pass between the hills which have been shaken by earthquake and torn by convulsion, we find that periods of perfect repose succeed those of destruction. The pools of calm water lie clear beneath their fallen rocks, the water-lilies gleam, and the reeds whisper among their shadows; the village rises again over the forgotten graves, and its church tower, white through the storm-light, proclaims a renewed appeal to His protection in whose hand "are all the corners of the earth, and the strength of the hills is His also." There is no loveliness of Alpine valley that does not teach the same lesson. It is just where "the mountain falling cometh to nought, and the rock is removed out of his place," that in process of years the fairest meadows bloom between the fragments, the clearest rivulets murmur from between their crevices among the flowers, and the clustered cottages, each sheltered beneath some strength of mossy stone, now to be removed no more,

and with their pastured flocks around them, safe from the eagle's stoop and the wolf's ravin, have written upon their fronts, in simple words, the mountaineer's faith in the ancient promise,—"Neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction, when it cometh; for thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field, and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee"

SECTION VII.

ILLUSTRATIVE: PLANTS AND FLOWERS.

54. Wonderful, in universal adaptation to man's need, desire, and discipline, God's daily preparation of the earth for him, with beautiful means of life. First, a carpet, to make it soft for him; then a coloured fantasy of embroidery thereon; then, tall spreading of foliage to shade him from sun-heat, and shade also the fallen rain, that it may not dry quickly back into the clouds, but stay to nourish the springs among the moss. Stout wood to bear this leafage; easily to be cut, yet tough and light, to make houses for him, or instruments (lance-shaft, or plough-handle, according to his temper); useless it had been if harder; useless if less fibrous; useless if less elastic. Winter comes, and the shade of leafage falls away, to let the sun warm the earth; the strong boughs remain, breaking the strength of winter winds.

The seeds which are to prolong the race, innumerable according to the need, are made beautiful and palatable, varied into infinitude of appeal to the fancy of man, or provision for his service; cold juice, or flowing spice, or balm, or incense, softening oil, preserving resin, medicine of styptic, febrifuge, or lulling charm; and all these presented in forms of endless change. Fragility or force, softness and strength, in all degrees and aspects; unerring uprightness, as of temple pillars, or unguided wandering of feeble tendrils on the ground; mighty resistances of rigid arm and limb to the storms of ages, or wavings to and fro with faintest pulse of summer streamlet; roots cleaving the strength of rock, or binding the transience of the sand; crests basking in sunshine of the desert, or hiding by dripping spring and lightless cave; foliage far tossing in entangled fields beneath every wave of ocean—clothing with variegated, everlasting films the peaks of the trackless mountains, or ministering, at cottage doors, to every gentlest passion and simplest joy of humanity.

46. If ever in autumn a pensiveness falls upon us, as the leaves drift by in their fading, may we not wisely look up in hope to their mighty monuments? Behold how fair, how far prolonged in arch and aisle, the avenues of the valleys, the fringes of the hills! so stately,—so eternal; the joy of man, the comfort of all living creatures, the glory of the earth,—they are but the monuments of those poor leaves that flit faintly past us to die. Let them not pass, without our understanding their last counsel and example: that we also, careless of monument by the grave, may build it in the world—monument by which men may be taught to remember, not where we died, but where we lived.

47. The Pine. Magnificent! nay, sometimes almost terrible. Other trees, tufting crag or hill, yield to the form and sway of the ground, clothe it with soft compliance, are partly its subjects, partly its flatterers, partly its comforters. But the pine rises in serene resistance, self-contained; nor can I ever without awe stay long under a great Alpine cliff, far

from all house or work of men, looking up to its companies of pines, as they stand on the inaccessible juts and perilous ledges of the enormous wall, in quiet multitudes, each like the shadow of the one beside it—upright, fixed, spectral, as troops of ghosts standing on the walls of Hades, not knowing each other, dumb for ever. You cannot reach them, cannot cry to them: those trees never heard human voice; they are far above all sound but of the winds. No foot ever stirred fallen leaf of theirs: all comfortless they stand, between the two eternities of the Vacancy and the Rock; yet with such iron will, that the rock itself looks bent and shattered beside them,—fragile, weak, inconsistent, compared to their dark energy of delicate life, and monotony of enchanted pride —unnumbered, unconquerable.

Then note farther their perfectness. The impression on most people's minds must have been received more from pictures than reality, so far as I can judge, so ragged they think the pine; whereas its chief character in health is green and full *roundness*. It stands

compact, like one of its own cones, slightly curved on its sides, finished and quaint as a carved tree in some Elizabethan garden; and instead of being wild in expression, forms the softest of all forest scenery, for other trees show their trunks and twisting boughs; but the pine, growing either in luxuriant mass, or in happy isolation, allows no branch to be seen. Summit behind summit rise its pyramidal ranges, or down to the very grass sweep the circlets of its boughs; so that there is nothing but green cone, and green carpet. Nor is it only softer, but in one sense more cheerful than other foliage, for it casts only a pyramidal shadow. Lowland forest arches overhead, and chequers the ground with darkness; but the pine, growing in scattered groups, leaves the glades between emerald-bright. Its gloom is all its own; narrowing into the sky, it lets the sunshine strike down to the dew. And if ever a superstitious feeling comes over me among the pine glades, it is never tainted with the old German forest fear, but it is only a more solemn tone of the fairy enchantment that haunts our English meadows; so that I have

always called the prettiest pine-glade in Chamouni, "Fairies' Hollow." It is in the glen beneath the steep ascent above Pont Pelissier, and may be reached by a little winding path which goes down from the top of the hill *—being indeed not truly a glen, but a broad ledge of moss and turf, leaning in a formidable precipice (which, however, the gentle branches hide) over the Arve. An almost isolated rock promontory, many coloured, rises at the end of it. On the other sides it is bordered by cliffs, from which a little cascade falls, literally, down among the pines, for it is so light, shaking itself into mere showers of seed pearl in the sun, that the pines don't know it from mist, and grow through it without minding. Underneath, there is only the mossy silence; and above, for ever, the snow of the nameless Aiguille.

Other trees rise against the sky in dots and knots, but this, in fringes. You never see the edges of it, so subtle are they; and for this

* The new road to Chamouni has been carried right through it. A cascade on the right, as you ascend, marks the place spoken of in the text,—once as lonely as Corrie-nan-shian.

reason,—it alone of trees, so far as I know, is capable of the fiery change which has been noticed by Shakespeare. When the sun rises behind a ridge crested with pine, provided the ridge be at a distance of about two miles, and seen clear, all the trees, for about three or four degrees on each side of the sun, become trees of light, seen in clear flame against the darker sky, and dazzling as the sun itself. I thought at first this was owing to the actual lustre of the leaves; but I believe now it is caused by the cloud-dew upon them—every minutest leaf carrying its diamond. It seems as if these trees, living always among the clouds, had caught part of their glory from them; and themselves, the darkest of vegetation, could yet add splendour to the sun itself.

48. The Swiss have certainly no feelings respecting their mountains in anywise correspondent with ours. It was rather as fortresses of defence, than as spectacles of splendour, that the cliffs of the Rothslock bare rule over the destinies of those who dwelt at their feet; and the training for which the mountain children

had to thank the slopes of the Muotta-Thal, was in soundness of breath, and steadiness of limb, far more than in elevation of idea. But the point which I desire the reader to note is, that the character of the scene which, if any, appears to have been impressive to the inhabitant, is not that which we ourselves feel when we enter the district. It was not from their lakes, nor their cliffs, nor their glaciers—though these were all peculiarly their possessions—that the three venerable cantons received their name. They were not called the States of the Rock, nor the States of the Lake, but the States of the *Forest*. And the one of the three which contains the most touching record of the spiritual power of Swiss religion, in the name of the convent of the 'Hill of Angels,' has, for its own, none but the sweet childish name of 'Under the Woods.'

And indeed you may pass under them if, leaving the most sacred spot in Swiss history, the Meadow of the Three Fountains, you bid the boatman row southward a little way by the shore of the Bay of Uri. Steepest there on its western side, the walls of its rocks

ascend to heaven. Far in the blue of evening, like a great cathedral pavement, lies the lake in its darkness; and you may hear the whisper of innumerable falling waters return from the hollows of the cliff, like the voices of a multitude praying under their breath. From time to time the beat of a wave, slow lifted where the rocks lean over the black depth, dies heavily as the last note of a requiem. Opposite, green with steep grass, and set with châlet villages, the Fron-Alp rises in one solemn glow of pastoral light and peace; and above, against the clouds of twilight, ghostly on the gray precipice, stand, myriad by myriad, the shadowy armies of the Unterwalden pine.

49. It had been wild weather when I left Rome, and all across the Campagna the clouds were sweeping in sulphurous blue, with a clap of thunder or two, and breaking gleams of sun along the Claudian aqueduct, lighting up the infinity of its arches, like the bridge of Chaos. But as I climbed the long slope of the Alban Mount, the storm swept finally to the north,

and the noble outline of the domes of Albano, and graceful darkness of its ilex grove, rose against pure streaks of alternate blue and amber, the upper sky gradually flushing through the last fragments of rain-cloud in deep palpitating azure, half æther and half dew. The noonday sun came slanting down the rocky slopes of La Riccia, and their masses of entangled and tall foliage, whose autumnal tints were mixed with the wet verdure of a thousand evergreens, were penetrated with it, as with rain. I cannot call it colour,—it was conflagration. Purple, and crimson, and scarlet, like the curtains of God's Tabernacle, the rejoicing trees sank into the valley in showers of light, every separate leaf quivering with buoyant and burning life; each, as it turned to reflect, or to transmit the sunbeam, first a torch and then an emerald. Far up into the recesses of the valley the green vistas arched like the hollows of mighty waves of some crystalline sea, with the arbutus flowers dashed along their banks for foam, and silver flakes of orange spray tossed into the air around them, breaking over the grey walls of rock into a thousand separate

stars, fading and kindling alternately as the weak wind lifted and let them fall. Every glade of grass burned like the golden floor of heaven, opening in sudden gleams as the foliage broke, and closed above it, as sheet-lightning opens in a cloud at sunset; the motionless masses of dark rock, dark though flushed with scarlet lichen, casting their quiet shadows across its restless radiance, the fountain underneath them filling its marble hollow with blue mist and fitful sound; and, over all, the multitudinous bars of amber and rose—the sacred clouds that have no darkness, and only exist to illumine—were seen in fathomless intervals between the solemn and orbed repose of the stone pines, passing to lose themselves in the last, white, blinding lustre of the measureless line where the Campagna melted into the blaze of the sea.

50. Flowers seem intended for the solace of ordinary humanity: children love them; quiet, contented, ordinary people love them as they grow; luxurious and disorderly people rejoice in them gathered; they are the cottager's

treasure; and in the crowded town, mark, as with a little broken fragment of rainbow, the windows of the workers in whose hearts rests the covenant of peace.

51. Yet few people really care about flowers. Many, indeed, are fond of finding a new shape of blossom, caring for it as a child cares about a kaleidoscope. Many, also, like a fair service of flowers in the greenhouse, as a fair service of plate on the table. Many are scientifically interested in them, though even these in the nomenclature, rather than the flowers; and a few enjoy their gardens. . . . . But, the blossoming time of the year being principally spring, I perceive it to be the mind of most people, during that period, to stay in towns. A year or two ago a keen-sighted and eccentrically-minded friend of mine, having taken it into his head to violate this national custom, and go to the Tyrol in spring, was passing through a valley near Landech with several similarly headstrong companions. A strange mountain appeared in the distance, belted about its breast with a zone of blue,

like our English Queen. Was it a blue cloud, a blue horizontal bar of the air that Titian breathed in youth, seen now far away, which mortal might never breathe again? Was it a mirage—a meteor? Would it stay to be approached?—(ten miles of winding road yet between them and the foot of the mountain)—such questioning had they concerning it. My keen-sighted friend, alone, maintained it to be substantial;—whatever it might be, it was not air, and would not vanish. The ten miles of road were overpast, the carriage left, the mountain climbed. It stayed patiently, expanding still into richer breath and heavenlier glow—a belt of gentians. Such things may verily be seen among the Alps in spring, and in spring only; which being so, I observe most people prefer going in autumn.

52. Perhaps few people have ever asked themselves why they admire a rose so much more than all other flowers. If they consider, they will find, first, that red is, in a delicately gradated state, the loveliest of all pure colours; and, secondly, that in the rose there

is *no shadow*, except what is composed of colour. All its shadows are fuller in colour than its lights, owing to the translucency and reflective power of the leaves.

53. Has the reader ever considered the relations of commonest forms of volatile substance? The invisible particles which cause the scent of a rose-leaf, how minute, how multitudinous, passing richly away into the air continually!

54. In the range of inorganic nature I doubt if any object can be found more perfectly beautiful, than a fresh, deep snow-drift, seen under warm light. Its curves are of inconceivable perfection and changefulness; its surface and transparency alike exquisite; its light and shade of inexhaustible variety and inimitable finish,—the shadows sharp, pale, and of heavenly colour, the reflected lights intense and multitudinous, and mingled with the sweet occurrences of transmitted light. . . . . If, passing to the edge of a sheet of it upon the lower Alps, early in May, we find, as we are

nearly sure to find, two or three little round openings pierced in it; and through these, emergent, a slender, pensive, fragile flower,* whose small, dark, purple-fringed bell hangs down and shudders over the icy cleft that it has cloven, as if partly wondering at its own recent grave, and partly dying of very fatigue after its hard-won victory; we shall be, or we ought to be, moved by a totally different impression of loveliness from that which we receive among the dead ice and the idle clouds: there is now uttered to us a call for sympathy, now offered to us an image of moral purpose and achievement, which, however unconscious or senseless the creature may indeed be that so seems to call, cannot be heard without affection, nor contemplated without worship, by any of us whose heart is rightly turned, or whose mind is clearly and surely sighted.

* Soldanella Alpina. I think it is the only Alpine flower which actually pierces snow, though I have seen gentians filling thawed hoof-prints. Crocuses are languid till they have had sun for a day or two But the soldanella enjoys its snow, at first, and afterwards its fields. I have seen it make a pasture look like a large lilac silk gown.

55. It has been well shown by Dr. Herbert, that many plants are found alone on a certain soil or sub-soil in a wild state, not because such soil is favourable to them, but because they alone are capable of existing on it, and because all dangerous rivals are by its inhospitality removed. Now if we withdraw the plant from this position, which it hardly endures, and supply it with the earth and maintain about it the temperature that it delights in; withdrawing from it, at the same time, all rivals, which in such conditions Nature would have thrust upon it, we shall indeed obtain a magnificently developed example of the plant, colossal in size, and splendid in organization; but we shall utterly lose in it that moral ideal which is dependent on its right fulfilment of its appointed functions. It was intended and created by the Deity for the covering of those lonely spots where no other plant could live. It has been thereto endowed with courage and strength, and capacities of endurance; its character and glory are not therefore in the gluttonous and idle feeding of its own over luxuriance, at the expense of other creatures utterly destroyed

and rooted out for its good alone; but in its right doing of its hard duty, and forward climbing into those spots of forlorn hope where it alone can bear witness to the kindness and presence of the Spirit that cutteth out rivers among the rocks, as He covers the valleys with corn; and there, in its vanward place, and only there, where nothing is withdrawn for it, nor hurt by it, and where nothing can take part of its honour, nor usurp its throne, are its strength and fairness, and price, and goodness in the sight of God to be truly esteemed. The first time I saw the Soldanella Alpina, before spoken of, it was growing of magnificent size on a sunny Alpine pasture, among bleating of sheep, and lowing of cattle, associated with a profusion of Geum Montanum, and Ranunculus Pyrenæus. I noticed it only because new to me—nor perceived any peculiar beauty in its cloven flower. Some days after, I found it alone, among the rack of the higher clouds, and howling of glacier winds; and, as I described it, piercing through an edge of avalanche which in its retiring had left the new ground brown and lifeless, and as if burnt by

recent fire. The plant was poor and feeble, and seemingly exhausted with its efforts,—but it was then that I comprehended its ideal character, and saw its noble function and order of glory among the constellations of the earth.

56. Grasses.—Minute, granular, feathery, or downy seed-vessels, mingling quaint brown punctuation, and dusty tremors of dancing grain, with the bloom of the nearer fields; and casting a gossamered grayness and softness of plumy mist along their surfaces far away; mysterious evermore, not only with dew in the morning, or mirage at noon, but with the shaking threads of fine arborescence, each a little belfry of grainbells, all a-chime.

57. Gather a single blade of grass, and examine for a minute quietly its narrow sword-shaped strip of fluted green. Nothing, as it seems, there of notable goodness or beauty. A very little strength and a very little tallness, and a few delicate long lines meeting in a point,—not a perfect point neither, but blunt and unfinished, by no means a

creditable or apparently much-cared-for example of Nature's workmanship, made, only to be trodden on to-day, and to-morrow to be cast into the oven,—and a little pale and hollow stalk, feeble and flaccid, leading down to the dull brown fibres of roots. And yet, think of it well, and judge whether, of all the gorgeous flowers that beam in summer air, and of all strong and goodly trees, pleasant to the eyes, or good for food,—stately palm and pine, strong ash and oak, scented citron, burdened vine—there be any by man so deeply loved, by God so highly graced, as that narrow point of feeble green. And well does it fulfil its mission. Consider what we owe merely to the meadow grass, to the covering of the dark ground by that glorious enamel, by the companies of those soft, and countless, and peaceful spears. The fields! Follow forth but for a little time the thoughts of all that we ought to recognise in these words. All spring and summer is in them—the walks by silent, scented paths—the rests in noonday heat,—the joy of herds and flocks,—the power of all shepherd life and meditation,—the life of

sunlight upon the world falling in emerald streaks, and falling in soft blue shadows where else it would have struck upon the dark mould, or scorching dust. Pastures beside the pacing brooks, soft banks and knolls of lowly hills, thymy slopes of down, overlooked by the blue line of lifted sea, crisp lawns, all dim with early dew, or smooth in evening warmth of barred sunshine, dinted by happy feet, and softening in their fall the sound of loving voices,—all these are summed in those simple words; and these are not all. We may not measure to the full the depth of this heavenly gift in our own land, though still as we think of it longer, the infinite of that meadow sweetness, Shakespeare's peculiar joy, would open on us more and more; yet we have it but in part. Go out in the spring-time among the meadows that slope from the shores of the Swiss lakes to the roots of their lower mountains. There, mingled with the taller gentians, and the white narcissus, the grass grows deep and free; and as you follow the winding mountain path, beneath arching boughs, all veiled with blossom—paths that for ever droop and rise over the green banks

and mounds sweeping down in scented undulation steep to the blue water, studded here and there with new-mown heaps filling all the air with fainter sweetness,—look up towards the higher hills, where the waves of everlasting green roll silently into their long inlets among the shadows of the pines; and we may perhaps at last know the meaning of those quiet words of the 147th Psalm, "He maketh grass to grow upon the mountains."

Assembling the images we have traced, and adding the simplest of all, from Isaiah xl. 6, we find the grass and flowers are types, in their passing, of the passing of human life, and in their excellence, of the excellence of human life; and this in twofold way: first by their beneficence, and then by their endurance—the grass of the earth, in giving the seed of corn, and in its beauty under tread of foot and stroke of scythe; and the grass of the waters, in giving its freshness for our rest, and in its bending before the wave. But, understood in the broad human and Divine sense, the "*herb* yielding seed"—(as opposed to the fruit tree yielding fruit)—includes a

third family of plants, and fulfils a third office to the human race. It includes the great family of the lints and flaxes, and fulfils thus the *three* offices of giving food, raiment, and rest. Follow out this fulfilment; consider the association of the linen garment and the linen embroidery with the priestly office and the furniture of the tabernacle, and consider how the rush has been to all time the first natural carpet thrown under the human foot. Then next observe the three virtues definitely set forth by the three families of plants—not arbitrarily or fancifully associated with them, but in all the three cases marked for us by Scriptural words: 1st. Cheerfulness, or joyful serenity; in the grass for food and beauty—"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin." 2nd. Humility; in the grass for rest—"A bruised reed shall he not break." 3rd. Love; in the grass for clothing, (because of its swift kindling,)—"The smoking flax shall he not quench." And then finally observe the confirmation of these last two images in, I suppose, the most important prophecy, relating to the future state

of the Christian Church, which occurs in the Old Testament, namely that contained in the closing chapters of Ezekiel. The measures of the Temple of God are to be taken; and because it is only by charity and humility that those measures ever can be taken, the angel has "a line of *flax* in his hand, and a measuring reed." The use of the line was to measure the land, and of the reed to take the dimensions of the buildings; so the buildings of the church, or its labours, are to be measured by humility; and its territory, or land, by love.

58. Leaves motionless. The strong pines wave above them, and the weak grasses tremble beside them; but the blue stars rest upon the earth with a peace as of heaven; and far along the ridges of iron rock, moveless as they, the rubied crests of Alpine rose flush in the low rays of morning.

59. Mosses.—Meek creatures! the first mercy of the earth, veiling with hushed softness its dintless rocks; creatures full of pity, covering with strange and tender honour the

scarred disgrace of ruin, laying quiet finger on the trembling stones to teach them rest. No words, that I know of, will say what these mosses are. None are delicate enough, none perfect enough, none rich enough. How is one to tell of the rounded bosses of furred and beaming green,—the starred divisions of rubied bloom, fine-filmed, as if the rock spirits could spin porphyry as we do glass,—the traceries of intricate silver, and fringes of amber, lustrous, arborescent, burnished through every fibre into fitful brightness and glossy traverses of silken change, yet all subdued and pensive, and framed for simplest, sweetest offices of grace? They will not be gathered, like the flowers, for chaplet, or love-token; but of these the wild bird will make its nest, and the wearied child his pillow.

And as the earth's first mercy, so they are its last gift to us: when all other service is vain, from plant and tree, the soft mosses and gray lichen take up their watch by the headstone. The woods, the blossoms, the gift-bearing grasses, have done their parts for a

time; but these do service for ever. Trees for the builder's yard, flowers for the bride's chamber, corn for the granary, moss for the grave.

60. LICHENS.—As in one sense the humblest, in another they are the most honoured of the earth-children. Unfading as motionless, the worm frets them not, and the autumn wastes not. Strong in loveliness, they neither blanch in heat, nor pine in frost. To them, slow-fingered, constant-hearted, is entrusted the weaving of the dark, eternal tapestries of the hills; to them, slow-pencilled, iris-dyed, the tender framing of their endless imagery. Sharing the stillness of the unimpassioned rock, they share also its endurance; and while the winds of departing spring scatter the white hawthorn blossom like drifted snow, and summer dims on the parched meadow the drooping of its cowslip gold,—far above, among the mountains, the silver lichen spots rest, star-like, on the stone: and the gathering orange stain, upon the edge of yonder western peak, reflects the sunsets of a thousand years.

SECTION VIII.

EDUCATION.

61. The most helpful and sacred work which can at present be done for humanity, is to teach people (chiefly by example, as all best teaching must be done) not how "to better themselves," but how to "satisfy themselves." It is the curse of every evil nature and evil creature to eat and *not* be satisfied. The words of blessing are, that they shall eat and be satisfied; and as there is only one kind of water which quenches all thirst, so there is only one kind of bread which satisfies all hunger—the bread of justice or righteousness; which hungering after, men shall always be filled, that being the bread of Heaven; but hungering after the bread or wages of unrighteousness, shall not be filled, that being the bread of Sodom. And in order to teach men how to be satisfied, it is necessary fully to understand the art of joy and humble life—this,

at present, of all arts or sciences, being the one most needing study. Humble life; that is to say, proposing to itself no future exaltation, but only a sweet continuance: not excluding the idea of foresight, but wholly of fore-sorrow, and taking no troublous thought for coming days; so also not excluding the idea of providence or provision, but wholly of accumulation;—the life of domestic affection and domestic peace, full of sensitiveness to all elements of costless and kind pleasure;—therefore chiefly to the loveliness of the natural world.

62. We shall find that the love of nature, wherever it has existed, has been a faithful and sacred element of feeling; that is to say, supposing all the circumstances otherwise the same with respect to two individuals, the one who loves nature most will be always found to have more capacity for *faith* in God than the other. Nature-worship will be found to bring with it such a sense of the presence and power of a Great Spirit as no mere reasoning can either induce or controvert; and where that nature-worship is innocently pursued—*i.e.*,

with due respect to other claims on time, feeling, and exertion, and associated with the higher principles of religion,—it becomes the channel of certain sacred truths, which by no other means can be conveyed.

63. Instead of supposing the love of nature necessarily connected with the faithlessness of the age, I believe it is connected properly with the benevolence and liberty* of the age; that it is precisely the most healthy element which distinctively belongs to us; and that out of it, cultivated no longer in levity or ignorance, but in earnestness and as a duty, results will spring of an importance at present inconceivable; and lights arise, which, for the first time in man's history, will reveal to him the true nature of his life, the true field for his energies, and the true relations between him and his Maker.

* I forget, now, what I meant by 'liberty' in this passage; but I often used the word in my first writings, in a good sense, thinking of Scott's moorland rambles and the like. It is very wonderful to me, now, to see what hopes I had once: but Turner was alive, then; and the sun used to shine, and rivers to sparkle.

64. To any person who has all his senses about him, a quiet walk, over not more than ten or twelve miles of road a day, is the most amusing of all travelling; and all travelling becomes dull in exact proportion to its rapidity.

Going by railroad I do not consider as travelling at all; it is merely "being sent" to a place, and very little different from becoming a parcel.

65. I believe an immense gain in the bodily health and happiness of the upper classes would follow on their steadily endeavouring, however clumsily, to make the physical exertion they now necessarily exert in amusements, definitely serviceable. It would be far better, for instance, that a gentleman should mow his own fields, than ride over other people's.

66. In order to define what is fairest, you must delight in what is fair; and I know not how few or how many there may be who take such delight. Once I could speak joyfully about beautiful things, thinking to be understood;

now I cannot, any more for it seems to me that no one regards them. Wherever I look or travel, in England or abroad, I see that men, wherever they can reach, destroy all beauty. They seem to have no other desire or hope but to have large houses, and be able to move fast. Every perfect and lovely spot which they can touch, they defile. Thus the railroad bridge over the fall of Schaffhausen, and that round the Clarens shore of the lake of Geneva, have destroyed the power of two pieces of scenery of which nothing can ever supply the place, in appeal to the higher ranks of European mind.

67. The first thing which I remember as an event in life, was being taken by my nurse to the brow of Friar's Crag on Derwentwater. The intense joy, mingled with awe, that I had in looking through the hollows in the mossy roots, over the crag into the dark lake, has associated itself more or less with all twining roots of trees ever since. Two other things I remember as, in a sort, beginnings of life;—crossing Shap-fells, being let out of the chaise to run up the hills; and going through Glenfarg, near

Kinross, on a winter's morning, when the rocks were hung with icicles; these being culminating points in an early life of more travelling than is usually indulged to a child. In such journeyings, whenever they brought me near hills, and in all mountain ground and scenery, I had a pleasure, as early as I can remember, and continuing till I was eighteen or twenty, infinitely greater than any which has been since possible to me in anything.

68. A fool always wants to shorten space and time; a wise man wants to lengthen both. A fool wants to kill space and time; a wise man, first to gain them, then to animate them.

69. I suspect that system-makers in general are not of much more use, each in his own domain, than, in that of Pomona, the old women who tie cherries upon sticks, for the more portableness of the same. To cultivate well, and choose well, your cherries, is of some importance; but if they can be had in their own wild way of clustering about their crabbed stalks, it is a better connection for them than

any others; and if they cannot, then so that they be not bruised, it makes to a boy of practical disposition not much difference whether he gets them by handfuls, or in beaded symmetry on the exalting stick.

70. Every great man is always being helped by everybody, for his gift is to get good out of all things and all persons.

71. God appoints to every one of His creatures a separate mission, and if they discharge it honourably, if they quit themselves like men, and faithfully follow the light which is in them, withdrawing from it all cold and quenching influence, there will assuredly come of it such burning as, in its appointed mode and measure, shall shine before men, and be of service constant and holy. Degrees infinite of lustre there must always be, but the weakest among us has a gift, however seemingly trivial, which is peculiar to him, and which, worthily used. will be a gift also to his race for ever.

72. There is not any matter, nor any spirit, nor any creature, but it is capable of a unity of

some kind with other creatures; and in that unity is its perfection and theirs, and a pleasure also for the beholding of all other creatures that can behold. So the unity of spirits is partly in their sympathy, and partly in their giving and taking, and always in their love; and these are their delight and their strength; for their strength is in their co-working and army fellowship, and their delight is in their giving and receiving of alternate and perpetual good; their inseparable dependency on each other's being, and their essential and perfect depending on their Creator's. And so the unity of earthly creatures is their power, and their peace; not like the dead and cold peace of undisturbed stones and solitary mountains, but the living peace of trust, and the living power of support; of hands that hold each other and are still.*

73. It is good to read of that kindness and

* A long, affected, and obscure second volume sentence, written in imitation of Hooker. One short sentence from Ecclesiastes is the sum of it: "How can one be warm alone?"

humbleness of St. Francis of Assisi, who spoke never to bird, nor to cicada, nor even to wolf and beasts of prey, but as his brother ;—and so we find are moved the minds of all good and mighty men, as in the lesson that we have from the 'Mariner' of Coleridge, and yet more truly and rightly taught in the 'Hartleap Well'—

"Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels,"—

and again in the 'White Doe' of Rylstone, with the added teaching, that anguish of our own

"Is tempered and allayed by sympathies
Aloft ascending, and descending deep,
Even to the inferior kinds ;"—

so that I know not of anything more destructive of the whole theoretic faculty, not to say of the Christian character and human intellect,* than those accursed sports in which

* I am more and more grieved, as I re-read this and other portions of the most affected and weak of all my books, (written in a moulting time of my life,) —the second volume of 'Modern Painters,'—at its morbid violence of passion and narrowness of thought. Yet, at heart, the book was, like my others, honest ; and in substance it is mostly good ; but all boiled to rags.

man makes of himself cat, tiger, leopard, and alligator in one; and gathers into one continuance of cruelty, for his amusement, all the devices that brutes sparingly and at intervals use against each other for their necessities.

74. He who loves not God, nor his brother, cannot love the grass beneath his feet, nor the creatures which live not for his uses, filling those spaces in the universe which he needs not: while, on the other hand, none can love God, nor his human brother, without loving all things which his Father loves; nor without looking upon them every one as in that respect his brethren also, and perhaps worthier than he, if, in the under concords they have to fill, their part is touched more truly.*

75. Things may always be seen truly by

* Morbidly Franciscan, again! and I am really compelled to leave out one little bit my friend liked, —as all kindly and hopeful women would,—about everything turning out right, and being to some good end. For we have no business whatever with the ends of things, but with their beings; and their beings are often entirely bad.

candid people, though never *completely*. No human capacity ever yet saw the whole of a thing; but we may see more and more of it the longer we look. Every individual temper will see something different in it; but supposing the tempers honest, all the differences are there. Every advance in our acuteness of perception will show us something new; but the old and first-discerned thing will still be there, not falsified, only modified and enriched by the new perceptions, becoming continually more beautiful in its harmony with them, and more approved as a part of the infinite truth.

SECTION IX.

MORALITIES.

76. When people read, "The law came by Moses, but grace and truth by Christ," do they suppose it means that the law was ungracious and untrue? The law was given for a foundation; the grace (or mercy) and truth for fulfilment;—the whole forming one glorious Trinity of judgment, mercy, and truth.* And if people would but read the text of their Bibles with heartier purpose of understanding it, instead of superstitiously, they would see that throughout

* A great deal of the presumption and narrowness caused by my having been bred in the Evangelical schools, and which now fill me with shame and distress in re-reading 'Modern Painters,' is, to my present mind, atoned for by the accurate thinking by which I broke my way through to the great truth expressed in this passage, which all my later writings, without exception, have been directed to maintain and illustrate.

the parts which they are intended to make most personally their own, (the Psalms,) it is always the Law which is spoken of with chief joy. The Psalms respecting mercy are often sorrowful, as in thought of what it cost; but those respecting the Law are always full of delight. David cannot contain himself for joy in thinking of it,—he is never weary of its praise: "How love I Thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Thy testimonies are my delight and my counsellors; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb."

77. I suppose there is no event in the whole life of Christ to which, in hours of doubt or fear, men turn with more anxious thirst to know the close facts of it, or with more earnest and passionate dwelling upon every syllable of its recorded narrative, than Christ's showing Himself to His disciples at the Lake of Galilee. There is something pre-eminently open, natural, full fronting our disbelief, in this manifestation. The others, recorded after the resurrection, were sudden, phantom-like, occurring to men in profound sorrow and wearied agitation of heart;

not, it might seem, safe judges of what they saw. But the agitation was now over. They had gone back to their daily work, thinking still their business lay net-wards, unmeshed from the literal rope and drag. "Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a-fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee." True words enough, and having far echo beyond those Galilean hills. That night they caught nothing; but when the morning came, in the clear light of it, behold! a figure stood on the shore. They were not thinking of anything but their fruitless hauls. They had no guess who it was. It asked them simply if they had caught anything. They say, No, and it tells them to cast again. And John shades his eyes from the morning sun with his hand to look who it is; and though the glistening of the sea, too, dazzles him, he makes out who it is at last; and poor Simon, not to be outrun this time, tightens his fisher's coat about him, and dashes in over the nets. One would have liked to see him swim those hundred yards, and stagger to his knees upon the beach.

Well, the others get to the beach, too, in

time, in such slow way as men in general do get in this world to its true shore, much impeded by that wonderful "dragging the net with fishes"; but they get there—seven of them in all; first the Denier, and then the slowest believer, and then the quickest believer, and then the two throne-seekers, and two more, we know not who.

They sit down on the shore, face to face with Him, and eat their broiled fish as He bids. And then to Peter, all dripping still, shivering, and amazed, staring at Christ in the sun, on the other side of the coal-fire,—thinking a little perhaps of what happened by another coal-fire, when it was colder, and having had no word changed with him by his Master, since that look of His,—to him so amazed, comes the question, "Simon, lovest thou Me?" Try to feel that a little; and think of it till it is true to you: and then take up that infinite monstrosity and hypocrisy,—Raphael's cartoon of the charge to Peter. Note first the bold fallacy—the putting *all* the Apostles there, a mere lie to serve the Papal heresy of the Petric supremacy, by putting them all in the

background while Peter receives the charge, and making them all witnesses to it. Note the handsomely curled hair and neatly tied sandals of the men who had been out all night in the sea-mists, and on the slimy decks; note their convenient dresses for going a-fishing, with trains that lie a yard along the ground, and goodly fringes—all made to match;—an apostolic fishing costume. Note how Peter especially, (whose chief glory was in his wet coat *girt* about him, and naked limbs,) is enveloped in folds and fringes, so as to kneel and hold his keys with grace. No fire of coals at all, nor lonely mountain shore, but a pleasant Italian landscape, full of villas and churches, and a flock of sheep to be pointed at; and the whole group of Apostles, not round Christ, as they would have been naturally, but straggling away in a line, that they may be shown. The simple truth is, that the moment we look at the picture we feel our belief of the whole thing taken away. There is visibly no possibility of that group even having existed, in any place, or on any occasion. It is all a mere mythic absurdity, and

faded concoction of fringes, muscular arms, and curly heads of Greek philosophers.

78. Among the children of God, there is always that fearful and bowed apprehension of His majesty, and that sacred dread of all offence to Him which is called the Fear of God; yet of real and essential fear there is not any, but clinging of confidence to Him as their Rock, Fortress, and Deliverer; and perfect love, and casting out of fear; so that it is not possible that, while the mind is rightly bent on Him, there should be dread of anything earthly or supernatural; and the more dreadful seems the height of His majesty, the less fear they feel that dwell in the shadow of it. "Of whom shall I be afraid?"

79. If for every rebuke that we utter of men's vices, we put forth a claim upon their hearts; if for every assertion of God's demands from them, we could substitute a display of His kindness to them; if side by side with every warning of death, we could exhibit proofs and promises of immortality; if, in fine,

instead of assuming the being of an awful Deity, which men, though they cannot, and dare not deny, are always unwilling, sometimes unable to conceive, we were to show them a near, visible, inevitable, but all beneficent Deity, whose presence makes the earth itself a heaven, I think there would be fewer deaf children sitting in the market-place.

80. If not by sympathy discovered, it is not in words explicable with what divine lines and light the exercise of godliness and charity will mould and gild the hardest and coldest countenance, neither to what darkness their departure will consign the loveliest. For there is not any virtue the exercise of which, even momentarily, will not impress a new fairness upon the features.

81. The love of the human race is increased by their individual differences, and the unity of the creature, made perfect by each having something to bestow and to receive, bound to the rest by a thousand various necessities and various gratitudes; humility in each rejoicing

to admire in his fellow that which he finds not in himself, and each being in some respect the complement of his race.

82. They who are as the angels of God in heaven, yet cannot be conceived as so assimilated that their different experiences and affections upon earth shall then be forgotten and effectless: the child, taken early to his place, cannot be imagined to wear there such a body, nor to have such thoughts, as the glorified apostle who had finished his course and kept the faith on earth. And so, whatever perfections and likeness of love we may attribute to either the tried or the crowned creatures, there is the difference of the stars in glory among them yet; differences of original gifts, though not of occupying till their Lord come; different dispensations of trial and of trust, of sorrows and support, both in their own inward, variable hearts, and in their positions of exposure or of peace; of the gourd shadow and the smiting sun, of calling at heat of day, or eleventh hour, of the house unroofed by faith, or the clouds opened by revelation;

differences in warning, in mercies, in sickness, in signs, in time of calling to account; alike only they all are by that which is not of them, but the gift of God's unchangeable mercy: "I will give unto this last even as unto thee."

83. The desire of rest planted in the heart is no sensual, no unworthy one; but a longing for renovation, and for escape from a state whose every phase is mere preparation for another equally transitory, to one in which permanence shall have become possible through perfection. Hence the great call of Christ to men, that call on which St. Augustine fixed as the essential expression of Christian hope, is accompanied by the promise of rest; and the death bequest of Christ to men, is peace.

84. He who has once stood beside the grave, to look back upon the companionship which has been for ever closed, feeling how impotent, there, are the wild love, and the keen sorrow, to give one instant's pleasure to the pulseless heart, or atone in the lowest measure to the departed spirit, for the hour of unkindness, will scarcely for the future incur that debt to

the heart, which can only be discharged to the dust. But the lessons which men receive as individuals, they do not learn as nations. Again and again they have seen their noblest descend into the grave, and have thought it enough to garland the tombstone when they had not crowned the brow, and to pay the honour to the ashes, which they had denied to the spirit. Let it not displease them that they are bidden, amidst the tumult and the dazzle of their busy life, to listen for the few voices, and watch for the few lamps, which God has toned and lighted to charm and to guide them, that they may not learn their sweetness by their silence, nor their light by their decay.

85. In the Cathedral of Lucca, near the entrance door of the north transept, there is a monument by Jacopo della Quercia to Ilaria di Caretto, the wife of Paolo Guinigi. I name it not as more beautiful or perfect than other examples of the same period; but as furnishing an instance of the exact and right mean between the rigidity and rudeness of the earlier

monumental effigies, and the morbid imitation of life, sleep, or death, of which the fashion has taken place in modern times. She is lying on a simple couch, with a hound at her feet; not on the side, but with the head laid straight and simply on the hard pillow, in which, let it be observed, there is no effort at deceptive imitation of pressure.—It is understood as a pillow, but not mistaken for one. The hair is bound in a flat braid over the fair brow, the sweet and arched eyes are closed, the tenderness of the loving lips is set and quiet; there is that about them which forbids breath; something which is not death nor sleep, but the pure image of both. The hands are not lifted in prayer, neither folded, but the arms are laid at length upon the body, and the hands cross as they fall. The feet are hidden by the drapery, and the form of the limbs concealed, but not their tenderness.

86. I do not know any district possessing a more pure or uninterrupted fulness of mountain character, (and that of the highest order,) or which appears to have been less disturbed by foreign agencies, than that which borders the

course of the Trient between Valorsine and Martigny. The paths which lead to it out of the valley of the Rhone, rising at first in steep circles among the walnut trees, like winding stairs among the pillars of a Gothic tower, retire over the shoulders of the hills into a valley almost unknown, but thickly inhabited by an industrious and patient population. Along the ridges of the rocks, smoothed by old glaciers into long, dark, billowy swellings, like the backs of plunging dolphins, the peasant watches the slow colouring of the tufts of moss and roots of herb, which little by little gather a feeble soil over the iron substance; then, supporting the narrow slip of clinging ground with a few stones, he subdues it to the spade; and in a year or two a little crest of corn is seen waving upon the rocky casque. The irregular meadows run in and out like inlets of lake among these harvested rocks, sweet with perpetual streamlets that seem always to have chosen the steepest places to come down for the sake of the leaps, scattering their handfuls of crystal this way and that, as the wind takes them with all the grace, but with

none of the formalism, of fountains; dividing into fanciful change of dash and spring, yet with the seal of their granite channels upon them, as the lightest play of human speech may bear the seal of past toil, and closing back out of their spray to lave the rigid angles, and brighten with silver fringes and glassy films each lower and lower step of sable stone; until at last, gathered altogether again,—except perhaps some chance drops caught on the apple blossom, where it has budded a little nearer the cascade than it did last spring,—they find their way down to the turf, and lose themselves in that, silently; with quiet depth of clear water furrowing among the grass-blades, and looking only like their shadows but presently emerging again in little startled gushes and laughing hurries, as if they had remembered suddenly that the day was too short for them to get down the hill. Green field, and glowing rock, and glancing streamlet, all slope together in the sunshine towards the brows of ravines, where the pines take up their own dominion of saddened shade; and with everlasting roar, in the twilight, the

stronger torrents thunder down, pale from the glaciers, filling all the chasms with enchanted cold, beating themselves to pieces against the great rocks that they have themselves cast down, and forcing fierce way beneath their ghastly poise. The mountain paths stoop to those glens in forky zigzags, leading to some grey and narrow arch, all fringed under its shuddering curve with the ferns that fear the light; a cross of rough-hewn pine, iron-bound to its parapet, standing dark against the lurid fury of the foam. Far up the glen, as we pause beside the cross, the sky is seen through the openings in the pines thin with excess of light; and, in its clear consuming flame of white space, the summits of the rocky mountains are gathered into solemn crowns and circlets, all flushed in that strange faint silence of possession by the sunshine, which has in it so deep a melancholy, full of power, yet as frail as shadows; lifeless, like the walls of a sepulchre, yet beautiful in tender fall of crimson folds, like the veil of some sea spirit, that lives and dies as the foam flashes; fixed on a perpetual throne, stern against all strength, lifted above

all sorrows, and yet effaced and melted utterly into the air by that last sunbeam that has crossed to them from between the two golden clouds.

High above all sorrow? Yes; but not unwitnessing to it. The traveller on his happy journey, as his foot springs from the deep turf, and strikes the pebbles gaily over the edge of the mountain road, sees with a glance of delight the clusters of nut-brown cottages that nestle along those sloping orchards, and glow beneath the boughs of the pines. Here, it may well seem to him, if there be sometimes hardship, there must be at least innocence and peace, and fellowship of the human soul with nature. It is not so. The wild goats that leap along those rocks have as much passion of joy in all that fair work of God as the men that toil among them,—perhaps more. Enter the street of one of those villages, and you will find it foul with that gloomy foulness that is suffered only by torpor, or by anguish of soul. Here, it is torpor—not absolute suffering—not starvation or disease; but darkness of calm enduring: the spring, known only as the time of the scythe, and the autumn

as the time of the sickle, and the sun only as a warmth, the wind as a chill, and the mountains as a danger. They do not understand so much as the name of beauty, or of knowledge. They understand dimly that of virtue. Love, patience, hospitality, faith—these things they know. To glean their meadows side by side, so happier; to bear the burden up the breathless mountain flank unmurmuringly; to bid the stranger drink from their vessel of milk; to see at the foot of their low death-beds a pale figure upon a cross, dying, also patiently;—in this they are different from the cattle and from the stones; but, in all this, unrewarded, as far as concerns the present life. For them, there is neither hope nor passion of spirit; for them, neither advance nor exultation. Black bread, rude roof, dark night, laborious day, weary arm at sunset; and life ebbs away. No books, no thoughts, no attainments, no rest,—except only sometimes a little sitting in the sun under the church wall, as the bell tolls thin and far in the mountain air; a pattering of a few prayers, not understood, by the altar-rails of the dimly gilded chapel,—and so, back to the sombre home,

with the cloud upon them still unbroken—that cloud of rocky gloom, born out of the wild torrents and ruinous stones, and unlightened even in their religion, except by the vague promise of some better thing unknown, mingled with threatening, and obscured by an unspeakable horror—a smoke, as it were, of martyrdom, coiling up with the incense; and amidst the images of tortured bodies and lamenting spirits in hurtling flames, the very cross, for them, dashed more deeply than for others with gouts of blood.

87. A Highland scene is beyond doubt pleasant enough in its own way; but, looked close at, has its shadows.* Here, for instance, is the very fact of one—as pretty as I can remember,—having seen many. It is a little valley of soft turf, enclosed in its narrow oval by jutting rocks, and broad flakes of nodding

* Passage written to be opposed to an exuberant description, by an amiable Scottish pastor, of everything flattering to Scotchmen in the Highlands. I have put next to it, a little study of the sadness of Italy.

fern. From one side of it to the other winds, serpentine, a clear brown stream, drooping into quicker ripple as it reaches the end of the oval field, and then, first islanding a purple and white rock with an amber pool, it dashes away into a narrow fall of foam under a thicket of mountain ash and alder. The autumn sun, low, but clear, shines on the scarlet ash-berries and on the golden birch-leaves, which, fallen here and there, when the breeze has not caught them, rest quiet in the crannies of the purple rock. Beside the rock, in the hollow under the thicket, the carcase of a ewe, drowned in the last flood, lies nearly bare to the bone, its white ribs protruding through the skin, raven-torn; and the rags of its wool still flickering from the branches that first stayed it as the stream swept it down. A little lower, the current plunges, roaring, into a circular chasm like a well, surrounded on three sides by a chimney-like hollowness of polished rock, down which the foam slips in detached snow-flakes. Round the edges of the pool beneath, the water circles slowly like black oil; a little butterfly lies on its back, the wings glued to one of the

eddies, its limbs feebly quivering; a fish arises, and it is gone. Lower down the stream, I can see over a knoll the green and damp turf roofs of four or five hovels, built at the edge of a morass, which is trodden by the cattle into a black Slough of Despond at their doors, and traversed by a few ill-set stepping stones, with here and there a flat slab on the tops, where they have sunk out of sight;—and at the turn of the brook I see a man fishing, with a boy and a dog—a picturesque and pretty group enough certainly, if they had not been there all day starving. I know them, and I know the dog's ribs also, which are nearly as bare as the dead ewe's; and the child's wasted shoulders, cutting his old tartan jacket through, so sharp are they.

88. Perhaps there is no more impressive scene on earth than the solitary extent of the Campagna of Rome under evening light. Let the reader imagine himself for a moment withdrawn from the sounds and motion of the living world, and sent forth alone into this wild and wasted plain. The earth yields and

crumbles beneath his foot, tread he never so lightly, for its substance is white, hollow, and carious, like the dusty wreck of the bones of men. The long knotted grass waves and tosses feebly in the evening wind, and the shadows of its motion shake feverishly along the banks of ruin that lift themselves to the sunlight. Hillocks of mouldering earth heave around him, as if the dead beneath were struggling in their sleep. Scattered blocks of black stone, four-square remnants of mighty edifices, not one left upon another, lie upon them to keep them down. A dull purple poisonous haze stretches level along the desert, veiling its spectral wrecks of massy ruins, on whose rents the red light rests, like dying fire on defiled altars; the blue ridge of the Alban Mount lifts itself against a solemn space of green, clear, quiet sky. Watch-towers of dark clouds stand steadfastly along the promontories of the Apennines. From the plain to the mountains, the shattered aqueducts, pier beyond pier, melt into the darkness, like shadowy and countless troops of funeral mourners, passing from a nation's grave.

89. I was coming down one evening from the Rochers de Naye, above Montreux, having been at work among the limestone rocks, where I could get no water, and both weary and thirsty. Coming to a spring at the turn of the path, conducted, as usual, by the herdsmen, into a hollowed pine trunk, I stooped to it, and drank deeply. As I raised my head, drawing breath heavily, some one behind me said, "Celui qui boira de cette eau-ci, aura encore soif." I turned, not understanding for a moment what was meant, and saw one of the hill peasants, probably returning to his châlet from the market place at Vevay or Villeneuve. As I looked at him with an uncomprehending expression, he went on with the verse: "Mais celui qui boira de l'eau que je lui donnerai, n'aura jamais soif."

90. It may perhaps be permitted me * to mark the significance of the earliest mention of mountains in the Mosaic books; at least of those in which some Divine appointment or

* With reference to the choice of mountain dwellings by the greater monastic orders.

command is stated respecting them. They are first brought before us as refuges for God's people from the two judgments of water and fire. The Ark rests upon the mountains of Ararat; and man, having passed through the great Baptism unto death, kneels upon the earth first where it is nearest heaven, and mingles with the mountain clouds the smoke of his sacrifice of thanksgiving. Again; from the midst of the first judgment by fire, the command of the Deity to His servant is, "Escape to the mountain;" and the morbid fear of the hills, which fills any human mind after long stay in places of luxury and sin, is strangely marked in Lot's complaining reply, "I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me." The third mention, in way of ordinance, is a far more solemn one: "Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off." "The Place," the mountain of myrrh, or of bitterness, chosen to fulfil to all the seed of Abraham, far off and near, the inner meaning of promise regarded in that vow: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh mine help." And the fourth is the delivery

of the law on Sinai. It seemed then to the monks that the mountains were appointed by their Maker to be to man refuges from judgment, signs of redemption, and altars of sanctification and obedience; and they saw them afterwards connected, in the manner the most touching and gracious, with the death, after his task had been accomplished, of the first anointed Priest; the death, in like manner, of the first inspired Lawgiver; and lastly, with the assumption of His office, by the Eternal Priest, Lawgiver, and Saviour.

Observe the connection of these three events. Although the *time* of the deaths of Aaron and Moses was hastened by God's displeasure, we have not, it seems to me, the slightest warrant for concluding that the *manner* of their deaths was intended to be grievous or dishonourable to them. Far from this, it cannot, I think, be doubted that in the denial of the permission to enter the Promised Land, the whole punishment of their sin was included; and that, as far as regarded the manner of their deaths, it must have been appointed for them by their Master, in all tenderness and

love, and with the full purpose of ennobling the close of their service upon the earth. It might have seemed to *us* more honourable that both should have been permitted to die beneath the shadow of the Tabernacle, the congregation of Israel watching by their side; and all whom they loved gathered together to receive the last message from the lips of the meek lawgiver, and the last blessing from the prayer of the anointed priest. But it was not thus they were permitted to die. Try to realize that going forth of Aaron from the midst of the congregation. He who had so often done sacrifice for their sin, going forth now to offer up his own spirit. He who had stood among them between the dead and the living, and had seen the eyes of all that great multitude turned to him, that by his intercession their breath might yet be drawn a moment more, going forth now to meet the angel of death face to face, and deliver himself into his hand. Try if you cannot walk in thought with those two brothers, and the son, as they passed the outmost tents of Israel, and turned, while yet the dew lay round about the camp, towards the

slopes of Mount Hor; talking together for the last time, as step by step they felt the steeper rising of the rocks, and hour after hour, beneath the ascending sun, the horizon grew broader as they climbed, and all the folded hills of Idumea, one by one subdued, showed, amidst their hollows in the haze of noon, the windings of that long desert journey, now at last to close. But who shall enter into the thoughts of the High Priest as his eye followed those paths of ancient pilgrimage; and through the silence of the arid and endless hills, stretching even to the dim peak of Sinai, the whole history of those forty years was unfolded before him, and the mystery of his own ministries revealed to him; and that other Holy of Holies, of which the mountain peaks were the altars, and the mountain clouds the veil, the firmament of his Father's dwelling, opened to him still more brightly and infinitely as he drew nearer his death?—until at last, on the shadeless summit, from him on whom sin was to be laid no more, from him on whose heart the names of sinful nations were to press their graven fire no longer, the brother and the son took

breastplate and ephod, and left him to his rest. There is indeed a secretness in this calm faith, and deep restraint of sorrow, into which it is difficult for us to enter; but the death of Moses himself is more easily to be conceived, and had in it circumstances still more touching as regards the influence of the external scene. For forty years Moses had not been alone. The care and burden of all the people, the weight of their woe, and guilt, and death, had been upon him continually. The multitude had been laid upon him as if he had conceived them; their tears had been his meat night and day, until he had felt as if God had withdrawn His favour from him, and he had prayed that he might be slain, and not see his wretchedness. And now at last the command came, "Get thee up into this mountain." The weary hands, that had been so long stayed up against the enemies of Israel, might lean again upon the shepherd's staff, and fold themselves for the shepherd's prayer—for the shepherd's slumber. Not strange to his feet, though forty years unknown, the roughness of the bare mountain path, as he climbed from ledge to ledge of

Abarim; not strange to his aged eyes the scattered clusters of the mountain herbage, and the broken shadows of the cliffs, indented far across the silence of uninhabited ravines; scenes such as those among which, as now, with none beside him but God, he had led his flocks so often; and which he had left, how painfully! taking upon him the appointed power to make of the fenced city a wilderness, and to fill the desert with songs of deliverance. It was not to embitter the last hours of his life that God restored to him for a day the beloved solitudes he had lost, and breathed the peace of the perpetual hills around him, and cast the world in which he had laboured, and sinned, far beneath his feet in that mist of dying blue;—all sin, all wandering, soon to be forgotten for ever. The Dead Sea—a type of God's anger understood by him, of all men, most clearly, who had seen the earth open her mouth, and the sea his depth, to overwhelm the companies of those who contended with his Master—laid waveless beneath him; and beyond it the fair hills of Judah, and the soft plains and banks of Jordan, purple in the evening light

as with the blood of redemption, and fading in their distant fulness into mysteries of promise and of love. There, with his unabated strength, his undimmed glance, lying down upon the utmost rocks, with angels waiting near to contend for the spoils of his spirit, he put off his earthly armour. We do deep reverence to his companion prophet, for whom the chariot of fire came down from heaven; but was his death less noble whom his Lord Himself buried in the vales of Moab, keeping, in the secrets of the eternal counsels, the knowledge of a sepulchre, from which he was to be called in the fulness of time, to talk with that Lord upon Hermon of the death that He should accomplish at Jerusalem?

And lastly, let us turn our thoughts for a few moments to the cause of the resurrection of these two prophets. We are all of us too much in the habit of passing it by, as a thing mystical and inconceivable, taking place in the life of Christ for some purpose not by us to be understood, or, at the best, merely as a manifestation of His divinity by brightness of heavenly light, and the

ministering of the spirits of the dead, intended to strengthen the faith of His three chosen apostles. And in this, as in many other events recorded by the Evangelists, we lose half the meaning, and evade the practical power upon ourselves, by never accepting in its fulness the idea that our Lord was "perfect man,"—"tempted in all things like as we are." Our preachers are continually trying, in all manner of subtle ways, to explain the union of the Divinity with the Manhood—an explanation which certainly involves first their being able to describe the nature of Deity itself, or, in plain words, to comprehend God. They never can explain, in any one particular, the union of the natures; they only succeed in weakening the faith of their hearers as to the entireness of either. The thing they have to do is precisely the contrary of this—to insist upon the *entireness* of both. We never think of Christ enough as God, never enough as Man; the instinctive habit of our minds being always to miss of the Divinity, and the reasoning and enforced habit to miss of the humanity. We are afraid to harbour in our own hearts, or to utter in the

hearing of others, any thought of our Lord as hungering, tired, sorrowful, having a human soul, a human will, and affected by events of human life, as a finite creature is: and yet one half of the efficiency of His atonement, and the whole of the efficiency of His example, depend on His having been this to the full. Consider, therefore, the Transfiguration as it relates to the human feelings of our Lord. It was the first definite preparation for His death. He had foretold it to His disciples six days before; then takes with Him the three chosen ones into "an high mountain apart." From an exceeding high mountain, at the first taking on Him the ministry of life, He had beheld and rejected the kingdoms of the earth, and their glory: now, on a high mountain, He takes upon Him the ministry of death. Peter and they that were with Him, as in Gethsemane, were heavy with sleep. Christ's work had to be done alone.

The tradition is that the Mount of Transfiguration was the summit of Tabor; but Tabor is neither a high mountain, nor was it in any sense a mountain "*apart*," being in those years

both inhabited and fortified. All the immediately preceding ministries of Christ had been at Cesarea Philippi. There is no mention of travel southward in the six days that intervened between the warning given to His disciples and the going up into the hill. What other hill could it be than the southward slope of that goodly mountain, Hermon, which is indeed the centre of all the Promised Land, from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt; the mount of fruitfulness, from which the springs of Jordan descended to the valleys of Israel? Along its mighty forest avenues, until the grass grew fair with the mountain lilies, His feet dashed in the dew of Hermon, He must have gone to pray His first recorded prayer about death; and from the steep of it, before He knelt, could see to the south all the dwellings of the people that had sat in darkness, and seen the great light, the land of Zabulon and of Naphtali, Galilee of the nations,—could see, even with His human sight, the gleam of that lake by Capernaum and Chorazin, and many a place loved by Him, and vainly ministered to, whose house was now left unto them desolate;

and chief of all, far in the utmost blue, the hills above Nazareth, sloping down to His old home; hills on which yet the stones lay loose that had been taken up to cast at Him when He left them for ever.

"And as He prayed, two men stood by Him." Among the many ways in which we miss the help and hold of Scripture, none is more subtle than our habit of supposing that, even as man, Christ was free from the fear of death. How could He then have been tempted as we are?—since among all the trials of the earth, none spring from the dust more terrible than that fear. It had to be borne by Him, indeed, in a unity which we can never comprehend, with the foreknowledge of victory, —as His sorrow for Lazarus with the consciousness of His power to restore him; but it *had* to be borne, and that in its full earthly terror; and the presence of it is surely marked for us enough by the rising of those two at His side. When, in the desert, He was girding Himself for the work of life, angels of life came and ministered to Him; now in the fair world, when He is girding Himself for the work of

death, the ministrants come to Him from the grave. But, from the grave, conquered. One from that tomb under Abarim, which His own hand had sealed long ago; the other, from the rest into which he had entered without seeing corruption. "There stood by Him Moses and Elias, and spake of His decease." Then, when the prayer is ended, the task accepted, first, since the star paused over Him at Bethlehem, the full glory falls upon Him from heaven, and the testimony is borne to His everlasting Sonship and power. "Hear ye Him."

If, in their remembrance of these things, and in their endeavour to follow in the footsteps of their Master, religious men of bygone days, closing themselves in the hill solitudes, forgot sometimes, and sometimes feared, the duties they owed to the active world, we may perhaps pardon them more easily than we ought to pardon ourselves, if we neither seek any influence for good, nor submit to it unsought, in scenes to which thus all the men whose writings we receive as inspired, together with their Lord, retired whenever they had any task or trial laid upon them

needing more than their usual strength of spirit. Nor perhaps should we have unprofitably entered into the mind of the earlier ages, if among our other thoughts, as we watch the chains of the snowy mountains rise on the horizon, we should sometimes admit the memory of the hour in which their Creator among their solitudes, entered on His travail for the salvation of our race; and indulge the dream, that as the flaming and trembling mountains of the earth seem to be the monuments of the manifesting of His terror on Sinai, these pure and white hills, near to the heaven, and sources of all good to the earth, are the appointed memorials of that light of His mercy, that fell, snowlike, on the Mount of Transfiguration.

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